THE PROPHET HARRIS AND HIS WORK IN IVORY COAST AND WESTERN GHANA

by

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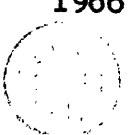

ERRATA

P. 72, footnote 1, C.W. Newbury, "The Formation of the Government General of French West Africa," Journal of African History, I, 1960, p. 114.

P. 356 (Bibliography), As above.

ABSTRACT

This thesis consists of an introduction and seven chapters.

In the introduction, the underlying assumption of the thesis is established: prophetic movements commonly rise out of a "colonial situation," since it is in such a situation that traditional religious beliefs, especially those concerned with sorcery and witchcraft, help to destroy the stability of a society already under attack. When a certain stage of social deterioration is reached, new religious institutions must come into existence, if the deterioration is to be halted. This response does not necessarily consist of a prophetic movement, but in the Ivory Coast in 1914 it did.

The body of the thesis traces the career of the Prophet Harris who emerged from the tensions and wars which existed between his people, the Grebos, and their rulers, the Americo-Liberians. Having undergone a spiritual experience which changed him from a political rebel to a "prophet," Harris wandered into the French colony of the Ivory Coast. Here the population was undergoing a swift training in the role expected of them as a colonized people, and the tensions thus engendered were finding vent in fearful religious practices, witch-hunts, poisoning, and sorcery. Harris condemned the fetishes, purified the sorcerers and witches, and inspired a new religious practice shorn of anti-social fears.

In the Gold Coast Harris became famous and, perhaps, more confident. He was welcomed back in the Ivory Coast by the Government in August-September 1914, but was expelled at the end of the year when the movement he created had grown to alarming proportions. His outlawed movement survived in varied forms; in some groups it encouraged constructive co-operation with the regime, in others, it helped solidify resistance. The Administration, afraid of the political consequences of the unsupervised religion, began in 1921 to support the Catholic Mission. However, the unexpected intervention of Wesleyan Methodist missionaries in 1923 led to the larger number of Harris converts becoming Methodists.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

Abid.	National Archives of the Ivory Coast, Abidjan
Accra	National Archives of Ghana, Accra
C.O.	Colonial Office records, Public Record Office, London
Cape Coast	Office of the Regional Commissioner, Cape Coast
Dakar	National Archives of Senegal, Dakar
F.O.	Foreign Office records, Public Record Office, London
M.M.S.	Methodist Missionary Society, London
M.M.S.-F.W.A.	French West Africa files, Methodist Missionary Society Archives, London
M.M.S.-G.C.	Gold Coast files, Methodist Missionary Society Archives, London
M.M.S.-W.N.	Western Nigeria (Lagos) files, Methodist Missionary Society Archives, London
Min. G.C.	Minutes of the Gold Coast District Synod
W.M.M.S.	Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, London

PREFACE

In Freetown, Sierra Leone, late in 1961, I first encountered the Prophet Harris in the pages of an old copy of African Challenge. He was mentioned in an instalment of the autobiography of Ernest Bruce, the Methodist Minister who had met Harris at Axim. He had secured a picture of Harris to illustrate his account, and so I saw the smiling white-robed figure who was to occupy so much of my thinking in the next few years.

I had come to Africa as an education officer in 1957, and from the beginning was intrigued by the confrontation of the culture I represented and that which I found in the villages of the Northern Province of Sierra Leone. Christianity, an integral part of my background, was struggling to acclimatize itself there. Inevitably, questions as to the place of Christianity and of the Western way of life in this society with its different traditions grew in my mind.

It was against this background that I read how Harris, a man who understood the traditional religious beliefs of West Africa and condemned them (or freed them from superstitious accretions), precipitated an abrupt religious transition. I was interested to know where he had found his sublime confidence, and why he was successful.

As I made enquiries I discovered that, despite Bruce's intimation that Harris's name was a household word, very little solid fact about him was available. He had visited Freetown in 1917, but that

visit had become a very faint memory. During the year which followed I began to read extensively on religious movements of the past and present, and especially on Kimbangism in the Congo, John Chilembwe in Nyasaland, independent church movements in East and Southern Africa, and similar movements in other parts of the world, such as the Cargo Cults of the South Pacific. In reading this literature and that available on Harris, it became clear to me that there was nothing on the latter comparable in scope or depth to those of the other studies. For a man often mentioned in the same breath as Simon Kimbangu, this was not good enough.

The primary studies of the Harris Movement published up to this time fell into two classes, both of which were disinclined to relate the Movement to other prophetic movements in the colonial world. In the first class were those accounts (Joseph, Marty, Gorju) which relied mainly on official sources and regarded Harris as a strange and powerful charismatic leader whose well-intentioned preaching had harmful results he could not control. On the other hand, Casely Hayford, Bianquis, and Platt considered that Harris was truly a messenger of God who, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, was able to effect deep spiritual reforms amongst his hearers.

Later studies of Harris were either derived from one or a number of the studies cited above, in which case they were really incapable of bringing a broader point of view to bear on the subject,

or they were based on one or more interviews with Ivoirians at a later date. In such accounts one was likely to find that the experience of a limited group of people was presented as that of a whole people. Moreover, the presentation of Harris in such accounts is almost static, as if the writers had no feeling that the words and actions of Harris might have undergone alterations during the fourteen months or so that he was in the area. Even the movements of the Prophet seemingly baffled these authorities, and no coherent picture of his activities emerges from their descriptions. Holas and other French authorities often go astray, furthermore, because they do not understand Protestantism and its part in the Prophet's background.

I have approached the Harris Movement with the aim of doing two things. I have put it in a framework of universal history, and as a necessary part of this I have examined the details of the Ivoirian situation and the movements of the Prophet in it, stressing the Gold Coast experiences of Harris so often ignored by published sources. To omit the Gold Coast events would be to mutilate the full picture of Harris.

To appreciate the place of the Harris Movement in historical terms I have found it essential to consult published works on Ivory Coast and African history, anthropological studies of colonialism, cultural reactions to it, and religious innovative movements in general. In order to locate the details of the Harris Movement I have consulted

archival collections and have undertaken an oral sampling of the memories of those who were caught up in the Movement.

I am satisfied that the collections of district reports in the National Archives of the Ivory Coast at Abidjan, and the oral evidence of the old men in villages of that country, give an insight into the situation as it existed before, during, and after the visit of Harris, which no published account has successfully conveyed. In particular, these accounts have been unjust to "the clerks," without whom I do not believe the Harris Movement could have rooted itself as it did.

These sources gave me also the data necessary for relating this specific movement to those in various parts of the world as analyzed in recent years by anthropologists. Anthony F.C. Wallace is particularly interesting as a theorist in this context, while the field studies of Margaret Mead among the Manus show enlightening parallels with the Ivory Coast development. One may quarrel with anthropologists when they attempt to classify independent religious movements according to generalizations which on closer inspection reveal too many exceptions, but they are valuable in reminding us that prophetic movements do rise out of particular circumstances which are not really unique, and that the goals they seek have much in common.

Before attempting any fieldwork in Africa, I consulted the primary sources available in Europe. Since Methodism claimed Harris

as her own, I applied to the Methodist Missionary Society in London for permission to search in their files. They very generously gave it, and from the files of correspondence between London and Cape Coast emerged the story of Harris in Apollonia, and the comparative failure of Methodism there and in the Ivory Coast at the same time. From the later files, in which W.J. Platt figured, came the account of Methodist success in the Ivory Coast between 1923 and 1930. These files are complete and well arranged.

The political background of Harris, such a mystery to all who had written on him, could only be explained by a scrutiny of primary material dealing with Grebo-Liberian relations. Fortunately for my research, Great Britain had been taking an increased interest in Liberia during the first decade of this century, and the consular reports from Liberia, preserved in the Public Records Office in London, provided a valuable source of information on Grebo attitudes towards the Liberian Government and Britain, while other material dealing with Liberia showed that these relations were affected by wide international pressures.

Archival sources in France were barred to me, since the period in which I was interested was relatively recent. As I had hoped, I found that the Archives at Dakar and Abidjan were open for this period, as were those in Accra. The well-organized collections at Dakar and Accra presented no great difficulty of accessibility.

In the former, the material on Harris, chiefly documents forwarded from Abidjan, are grouped in one file. In the latter, material is buried in administrative reports, and very little of it deals with Harris himself. The National Archives of the Ivory Coast, which have become very difficult of access since 1963, are badly catalogued, badly housed, and poorly staffed.

In order to tap the body of unpublished facts about Harris as seen by the natives of the Ivory Coast and Apollonia, it was essential to travel to the villages Harris had visited. I found the experience rewarding but frustrating. The old men I wished to interrogate were in no haste to satisfy my curiosity. Certain conventions had to be observed. They would not begin until their number was complete, and then my errand was discussed and my credentials scrutinized. When at last I was permitted to put my questions, there was a fierce discussion in the vernacular before an answer was formulated and interpreted to me. Under these circumstances, it was a pleasure to find the occasional old man willing to give an independent testimony. One felt that his personal account, rich in detail, made up in vitality for any errors of fact. There are dangers in relying altogether on oral sources, particularly when one has to communicate through an interpreter who has his own version of the events being described, which might colour his report. In this case, too, the old men who were interviewed have been exposed to so many spiritual ideas and

moral admonitions during their long lives that possibly they faced difficulties in disentangling the teachings of Harris from those of other religious teachers. To my knowledge, this never actually happened.

In conclusion, I wish to thank those who assisted my research in various ways:

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Many old men listed in the bibliography, who gave the oral evidence which provides a substantial part of this thesis.

INTRODUCTION

To a great extent, men are all moulded by their environment, and a "prophet" even more so than the rest. A prophet is fired by a revelation of the basic realities of his people's situation[1] and expounds them publicly. In so far as his words illuminate their situation for his hearers, they will follow his advice.

In many parts of the world during the past century prophets have arisen out of that particular nexus of tensions which Balandier has aptly called "the Colonial Situation,"[2] that peculiar condition in which one people is dominated by a foreign minority ethnically and culturally different, which claims superiority on the grounds of these differences and by its superior control of material forces. Prophets have emerged from this type of situation as the oppressed majorities have sought the key to their subordination in order that the unbearable tensions to which it subjected them might be weakened or obviated completely.[3]

There is a wide and increasing body of literature on the problem of prophetic movements; this paper is a study of one such prophet who worked in the colonized milieu of the stretch of the

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1 A.J.F. Köbben, "Prophetic Movements as an Expression of Social Protest," International Archives of Ethnography, XLIX, 1, 1960, p. 150.
A.F.C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements: Some Theoretical Considerations for Their Comparative Study," American Anthropologist, LVIII, 2, p. 270.
M. Mead, "Independent Religious Movements," Comparative Studies in Society and History, I, 4, June 1959, p. 325.

2 G. Balandier, Sociologie Actuelle de l'Afrique Noire, Paris, 1955, p. 33.

3 Ibid., pp. 418-9.

Guinea Coast between Freetown in Sierra Leone and Axim in the Gold Coast in the years from 1910 to 1929.

In the secular West, men put their trust in the revelations vouchsafed to secular prophets, but in Africa, as in the Old Testament, prophets receive their credentials from the unseen Spirit World.[1] On the other hand, even as the Old Testament prophets grappled with religious and moral problems against a background of economic and political crisis, so the underlying force propelling the African prophet may be tensions which in another time and place could express themselves in political terms.[2]

The Prophet Harris came to maturity in an oppressed society where the dominant minority were Americanized Negroes from the United States, the "Americo-Liberians," who were too weak to govern the native population effectively but too strong to be shaken off. Harris belonged to one of the tribes which tried to regain its independence by rebellion, and he himself took part in the attempt. On its failure he was filled by a holy persuasion that the barrier to the happiness of his people was the prevalence of "fetishism"

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1 W.C. Willoughby, The Soul of the Bantu, London, 1928, p. 113. C.G. Baëta, Prophetism in Ghana, London, 1962, p. 6.

2 K. Schlosser, Propheten in Afrika, Braunschweig, 1949, p. 401. She even seems to feel that the religious character of prophetic movements is subordinate to the personal ambitions of the leader as well as the economic and political problems his people face. L.P. Mair, "Independent Religious Movements in Three Continents," Comparative Studies in Society and History, I, 2, January 1959, p. 119.

amongst them. Possibly he felt they could not be as free as their Christian overlords until they too were Christian; it is doubtful that even in his own mind he could trace a sequence connecting the battle against the Liberian authorities with that against the traditional religion of the Coast.

While that traditional religion varied in its details among the tribes Harris visited, essentially it was one. Although the Supreme Being, the Creator, was referred to and honoured, he was not expected to be concerned with the details of men's lives, and in all that region there were probably no temples, priests, or altars serving him.[1] He was the Prime Mover, but when men wanted help in their daily lives they called on the ancestral spirits or the natural divinities of the rocks, woods, and water. Those individuals who were most anxious to control spiritual forces obtained fetishes (or, as Dr. Parrinder suggests, charms or amulets[2]): material objects which spiritual forces were induced to occupy in, as it were, a latent state, yet ready at the command or prayer of their owner to become active. Such men have been known as "fetish-men"

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1 E.G. Parrinder, African Traditional Religion, London, 1962, p. 39.

2 Ibid., p. 16.
E.G. Parrinder, West African Religion, London, 1949, pp. 12-3.

or (in the Ivory Coast) feticheurs; more exact terms, perhaps, would be "fetish practitioner," or magician, or sorcerer. Undesirable as the retention of the words "fetish" and "fetishism" may be for a correct understanding of African traditional religious beliefs, they necessarily find a place in this historical account since they were the terms used by those who described Harris's career, and by Harris himself.

Father Tempels has shown that the African view of the world accepts the idea that there are vital forces, originating with God,[1] which men may use to strengthen themselves or to weaken their enemies through prayers, magical practices, and medicine. Each man also controls a certain amount of vital force, personal to himself, which he may unleash to the hurt of others by willing it so or even by simply allowing himself to feel enmity, hatred, envy, or jealousy, for these are indications that he is radiating wicked forces (unconsciously, perhaps) to harm others. To do this is to be, in effect, a witch.[2]

Lucy P. Mair, who has analyzed the African belief in

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[1] P. Tempels, Bantu Philosophy, Paris, 1959, p. 30.

[2] E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande, Oxford, 1937, p. 21, "An act of witchcraft is a psychic act."

witchcraft, has shown that it follows logically from the African view that the world follows a moral pattern in which there is no room for chance.[1] In such a world, suffering is meant to fall only on those who deserve it, so when a man whose conduct has been blameless suffers some misfortune, the presumption is that a witch is at work.[2] In such a case a diviner may be called in to identify the witch, since there are no outward signs setting him (or her) apart from the rest of the community. Not only has the witch (unlike the sorcerer) done his evil by thought alone, but possibly the witch was not a person but an evil being who was inhabiting an innocent person without that person's knowledge.[3] The full terror of witchcraft can be appreciated when it is realized that not only would the individual be ignorant that he is eating the vital force of others at nightly covens but that in many societies it is his own relatives whom he thus kills. Among the Akans if a well-to-do person died it was his blood relatives who were suspected, for "if a person possessed the power of witchcraft, he used it to 'eat' within his own lineage."[4]

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1 L.P. Mair, "Witchcraft as a Problem in the Study of Religion," Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, IV, 1963-64, p. 335.

2 Ibid., p. 336. This is quite different from the European concept of a witch. See E.G. Parrinder, Witchcraft: European and African, London, 1958.

3 M.J. Field, Search for Security, London, 1960, p. 36. Dr. Field explains that the Akan word Obayifo (witch) means literally "a person who is the abode of the evil entity, the Obayi."

4 K.A. Busia, The Challenge of Africa, London, 1962, p. 23.

The above sketch of the religious and supernatural background against which Harris did his work naturally does not do justice to a whole field of study, but it may serve to indicate the nature of the forces against which he struggled, that is, the spiritual powers controlled by sorcerers and witches. In a time of social change, such as Harris encountered particularly in the Ivory Coast, new anxieties and tensions were arising which made it seem that evil-doers (both the involuntary "witches" and the unprincipled fetish practitioners) were more prevalent than ever before, and at the same time there was a general questioning of traditional values and a search for new ones. In the pre-scientific world it is normal for such dissatisfaction to erupt into a religious movement which sweeps everyone along with it and this, it will be seen, was what happened when the Prophet Harris preached his message in the Ivory Coast.

The Munkukusa or Mukunguna movement in the Congo in 1951-1953 was such a movement inspired by the belief in the prevalence of witchcraft. The ceremonial obliged the participants to wallow with their mouths in filth and grave-earth, swearing an oath never to repeat their crime of witchcraft. The rite was originated by a husband whose wife had deserted him after their child died. She had

accused him of having been a witch and of having eaten the soul of the child; he cleverly insisted that they had done it together and should together take this oath not to do it again.[1] The rite became the fashion as people reasoned that if everybody took it there would be no deaths from witchcraft and no more crops damaged by witch-directed animals. When in time it became obvious that death still existed, the cleansing ceremonies became institutionalized with a weekly service combining pagan and Christian ceremonies.

In Ghana, perhaps the most prosperous country in all black Africa, Dr. M.J. Field was told by an intelligent and educated third-generation Christian that "the country had become very unsettled and unsafe, witchcraft was spreading to seaside areas where it was formerly unknown and that precautions must be taken against it."[2] There a solution has been found in the setting up of new shrines where the mentally disturbed who believe they are witches are encouraged to confess and be absolved or purified. Dr. Field's theory is that the self-confessed witches of Ashanti are the same type of people as those

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[1] E. Andersson, Messianic Popular Movements in the Lower Congo, Uppsala, 1958, pp. 201-14.

[2] Field, op. cit., p. 54.

B. Malinowski, The Dynamics of Culture Change, New Haven, 1945, p. 97, suggested that the belief in witchcraft was "a symptom of economic distress, of social tension, or political or social oppression", conditions in which a society demanded scapegoats as in the 1930's the Jews were scapegoats in Germany and the Trotskyites in Russia. This suggestion taken alone simplifies too much; when there is tension and distress witches are suspected, but for reasons which stem from the core of African religious belief.

in Britain who give themselves up to the police and confess to being the cause of death and misery to their loved ones and others. In Britain this condition is termed Depression, and with treatment the patient recovers. In Africa, where the culture accepts the existence of witches, their self-accusations are taken seriously.

Dr. Field argues that the tensions of increased education, mobility, reliance on money crops, and strains developing in the traditional matrilineal culture reveal much more than formerly the mentally abnormal ("witches") but also subject the mentally healthy to changes of fortune for which the readiest explanation is witchcraft and evil spirits.

The striking thing about the career of the Prophet Harris was that he offered a solution to the problem of witches and fetishmen much more hopeful and capable of constant evolution, as society changed, than did the Munkukusa Movement or the new healing shrines in Ghana. In the Ivory Coast he offered such a persuasive image of the spiritual truth for which there was a mass hunger that there was a social revolution based on a purer moral code and a religious faith more equipped to deal with a changed society. The effect was so complete that for tens of thousands of people, who had known nothing of any other religion, belief in the traditional world of gods and spirits suddenly ceased; sanctions based on those beliefs crumbled, the old taboos were ignored, and society was free to build a new

order. The extent to which they did so varied greatly from group to group, depending on the social and historical peculiarities of each.

In the following pages the evidence will indicate how the Prophet Harris emerged as the product of the colonial experience of an African group, the Grebos; the nature of the peoples he influenced in the Ivory Coast and Western Ghana; and, finally, the subsequent histories of these people, some of whom simply tried to use the new-found solidarity to retreat into the pre-colonial past, while others took advantage of their opportunity to lessen the tensions of the Colonial Situation by adapting to it and moving forward, as Harris had certainly intended.

CHAPTER I

THE GREBO EXPERIENCE AND THE EMERGENCE OF A PROPHET

The emergence of a prophet amongst the Grebos of Eastern Liberia can only be understood against the background of their experience with Western culture as presented by missionaries, teachers, and the Americo-Liberian settlers. When the Grebos took up arms against the settlers in 1910 it was the fourth time since 1856 that they had seriously quarrelled with the foreigners whom they had allowed to settle among them and rule over them. That settler regime had begun with the landing of Negro settlers from Maryland, in the United States, on 10 February 1834, at Garraway, ten miles from Cape Palmas. They came prepared to found a "Maryland in Liberia" and were even equipped with the official seal bearing the motto "Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hands unto God." As the motto indicated, the colony was intended as a godly experiment which, as a base for missionary societies, would help to effect the conversion of Africa. Liberia as a whole was founded to drain off the many free Negroes of the southern United States, because their presence in large numbers was regarded as a constant incitement to the slaves to rebel in an effort to attain the same status. As early as 1790 the first United States census showed that Maryland, with a total population of 319,728, had

103,036 slaves and 8,043 free Negroes.[1] Virginia, equally afraid of slave risings, was anxious to be rid of her Free Blacks, and in the South, as well as among philanthropic Northerners, there was a keen interest in Britain's Sierra Leone experiment where, in fact, a large number of the settlers of 1792-3 had actually been born and bred in Virginia and the Carolinas. The growing number of Abolitionists, of course, opposed a scheme which was designed to make the perpetuation of slavery easier and which was almost bound to lead to fighting in Africa between the settlers and the natives.[2]

Eventually, the American Colonization Society, with Bushrod Washington as President, was founded in Virginia on 28 December 1816.[3] Daughter societies were founded in other states, all having as their objectives the collection of information which would assist the formation of a plan for planting colonies "of free people of colour with their consent" in Africa and elsewhere.[4]

The State of Maryland was one of the regions most anxious to cut back her growing free coloured population, and her Legislature

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1 E. Eastman, A History of the State of Maryland in Liberia, Monrovia, 1959, p. 21.

2 W.E.B. DuBois, "Africa and the American Negro Intelligentsia," Présence Africaine, 5, December 1955-January 1956, p. 37.

3 Eastman, op. cit., 17.

4 Ibid., p. 17.

in 1826 pledged $1,000 a year to the American Colonization Society in an effort to expedite the emigration of Maryland Negroes. When, however, they received the impression that Maryland was not enjoying any advantage in this Society, the Marylanders decided to make their own Society independent and spend the money themselves. In October 1827 the Maryland State Colonization Society was set up and found that in every corner of Maryland the taxpayers were willing to pay more if by doing so they might remove all the free Negroes.[1]

The first free American Negroes had already founded "Liberia" and settled Monrovia. The first settlers from Maryland sailed on one of the American Colonization Society's vessels in October 1831, with Dr. James Hall in attendance as their physician and agent in charge. Before they sailed they agreed to a constitution which bound them not to traffic in alcoholic spirits and to keep good faith with the natives.[2] Despite this undertaking, the Society at home decided within two years that the moral degeneration and administrative confusion in Liberia made it unfit to be a home for their settlers and they decided to found a completely independent settlement. According to Grebo tradition, Dr. Hall came to find out whether the Grebos at Cape Palmas would welcome his settlers and was told, after

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1 Eastman, op. cit., p. 25.

2 Ibid., p. 29.

much discussion among the natives, that these strangers of African descent might make their homes among them.[1] Whether this story is authentic or not, Dr. Hall had certainly remained on the Coast and had been discussing terms with the Grebos. He found that they were eager not least of all for the very trade in spirits which he was sworn to prohibit, and he was even instructed by the Society not to open negotiations by gifts of rum unless he found it impossible to do otherwise.

The "Ann" arrived at Garraway on 10 February 1834, and a number of Grebos, hopeful for gifts of rum and tobacco, met them. On 12-13 February a treaty was arranged between Hall and the three chiefs of the area, King Freeman (alias Parmah) of Cape Palmas, King Will (or Weah Balio) of Garraway, and Joe Howard (or Pahfleur) of Grand Cavally. They ceded him 400 square miles of land in exchange for an amount of trifling goods (pots, pans, hats, tobacco, etc.) and while the kings reserved the right to govern their own people, they acknowledged themselves "members of the colony of Maryland in Liberia, as far as to unite in common defense in case of war or foreign aggression."[2] Dr. Hall promised that three free schools would be opened within the year for native and settler children alike at the

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[1] Liberia. Dept. of the Interior. Bureau of Folkways, Traditional History and Folklore of the Glebo Tribe, Monrovia, 1957, p. 140.

[2] Eastman, op. cit., p. 42.

three main towns, Cape Palmas, Garraway, and Grand Cavally,[1] and agreed that each of the kings should send a son to America to be educated.

The colonists decided, for strategic reasons, to settle out on Cape Palmas, and towards the end of the year this area was named Harper in honour of one of the Society's patrons.

The Grebos, in their account of this arrival of the settlers, written long after, said:

> ... in the year 1834 a batch of black colonists just freed from slavery in America, reached our shores in search of a home.
>
> Pitying their condition, and rejoicing in the anticipation that by their settlement among us the benefits of Christian enlightenment and Civilization would be disseminated among the youth of our land, our fathers opened their arms and extended a cordial welcome to them. A treaty was then signed between the Colonists and our fathers in which, in deference to their acquisitions in intellectual and material advancement, our fathers were willing to accede to them the Government of the Country under the style of the State of Maryland in Liberia.
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> In this treaty our fathers reserved to themselves and their posterity the use of their towns and villages as well as their fields.[2]

However each side interpreted ownership of the land, it is evident that the colony intended to make no great distinction between settler and native, and that they were as anxious to bestow the benefits

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[1] The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions had already sent out Rev. J.L. Wilson with teachers to begin the work of education.

[2] F.O. 367/184, Memorial of Grebo Chiefs, 15 February 1910. This was presented to the British Government in an effort to secure their intervention in Grebo-Liberian affairs.

of education as the Grebos were to receive it.

On the matter of alcoholic spirits, however, there was no meeting of minds. The Grebos, along with the other Kru peoples, consumed large quantities of brandy, rum, and gin,[1] and Dr. Hall and his people were determined to have no dealings with these commodities. After the "Ann" had sailed away and the colonists were completely dependent on the tribespeople for food, it was hinted to Dr. Hall that there would be no more rice for sale until the restrictions were relaxed. The colonists could either sell them rum or starve to death. Dr. Hall hinted in return that if the colonists must die, they would die in war, not from starvation. The embargo on rice was thereupon relaxed.[2]

There was another incident which led to a productive result. Some of the settlers were detected stealing cassava from natives' fields, and the Grebo King and Dr. Hall agreed on the principle of each having a similar code of laws as a basis for punishing crime. King Freeman wanted to have it drawn up in the United States, and when Hall returned home he brought with him Simleh Ballah, "the King's Mouth." Ballah met with the Board of Managers, impressed them with his good sense, and contributed greatly to the code.[3]

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1 Sir. H. Johnston, Liberia, London, 1906, I, p. 174.

2 Eastman, op. cit., p. 47.

3 Ibid., p. 47.

In 1834 Dr. Hall retired as Governor and a Negro, John B. Russwurm, succeeded him. The colony was not, however, receiving many new settlers, as the Negroes in the United States looked forward to the attainment of equal rights there, despite being warned that their hopes of obtaining social and political equality were illusory, since their former masters could never receive them as equals in social and political relations.[1]

Liberia proclaimed its independence in 1847, and by 1851 the Maryland settlers were asking for concessions (including the right to engage in the spirit traffic) which would make them also virtually self-governing. In 1854 these were granted, and shortly after there was a confrontation of strength between the settlers and the natives.

The Governor, B.S. Drayton, realized that there were dissident settlers not averse to civil disobedience, as well as the Grebos who thought that the independent situation of the settlers left them the weak party where bargaining was concerned. He tried to deal with both dangers by a prompt and resolute move against the natives. President Tubman, in a speech at Harper on 24 April 1957, has described what ensued thus:

> ... the Maryland Government decided to attack the town known as Graway. But because of Sheppard Lake, attack on that town was strategically and tactically impracticable. The settlers

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[1] Eastman, op. cit., p. 60.

> undertook to let out the Lake by digging a canal between Harper and the rock known as 'Devil Rock'; but that effort proved unsuccessful. They then decided to attack Graway from the Sheppard Lake, and canoe loads of troops and arms started for Graway. On nearing the town, the tribesmen opened fire on the troops in the canoes; the Government troops returned the fire with cannons ... from the canoes. All of the canoes were upset immediately; the troops were dumped in the waters of the Lake and twenty-six men lost their lives.[1]

This catastrophe of 18 January 1857 left the frightened and demoralized Marylanders face to face with the justly aggrieved natives.

The Grebo account of the trouble ("the First Grebo War") is that the settlers,

> ... having established a Government that bade fair to make some sort of a showing, soon began to despise us[,] placing us in their room, and they in their master's just as in the same fashion as during their slavery days in America. Thus in 1856 feeling that we should no longer live in the same town with themselves, they without notice, and without reason, attacked us and burned our houses to ashes, thus expelling us from the Cape proper of Cape Palmas. When Dr. Hall, the American Colonization Society Agent who brought them out, returned towards the middle of the same year (1856), he inquired into the cause of the war, and finding nothing substantial, condemned the Liberians for their unreasonable and ungrateful conduct.[2]

Although the Grebos seem to have the date wrong, it is true that Dr. Hall did return. He was sent from Monrovia to adjudicate the dispute, and through his influence Liberia received a loan of

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1 E.R. Townshend, ed., President Tubman of Liberia Speaks, London, 1959, p. 223.

2 F.O. 367/184, Memorial of Grebo Chiefs, 15 February 1910.

$15,000 from the Maryland State Colonization Society which enabled the Republic to put a force in the field sufficient to overawe the Grebos. Dr. Hall then, in his own words, arranged "a speedy termination of hostilities and the adjustment of all difficulties by a treaty of peace between the contending parties, on equal terms."[1]

This treaty was signed a week after Maryland in Liberia had resigned all her pretensions to be a sovereign power and had accepted the status of a county of Liberia.[2]

This did not settle differences between the settlers and the natives and again and again they rose. One serious rising developed in 1875. The seaboard tribes between Grand Cess and San Pedro formed the "G'debo Reunited Kingdom" and attacked the Americo-Liberian settlements.[3] Bunker Hill and Philadelphia were destroyed and it was only with American aid that the rebellion, after a year, was crushed.[4]

The Grebo account of this again emphasizes their grievances.

> In 1875, taking advantage of the tribal schism which exists to this day among us, and which is encouraged in every possible way by the Liberians, the latter called upon us to act as baggage carriers in a war which they contemplated as against another section of our tribe. To this we demurred, as we were on friendly terms with that section of the tribe, but promised

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1 Eastman, op. cit., p. 76.

2 18 February 1857. Johnston, op. cit., p. 233.

3 Ibid., p. 233.

4 R.L. Buell, The Native Problem in Africa, New York, 1928, II, p. 737.

> to look well after the wives and children of the Liberians while they were on their expedition.
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> The then Governor ... at once interpreted our excuse into disobedience to the Liberians and again without notice declared war against us. Happily our arms were successful and we gained the advantage in the conflict.[1]

This then was the type of association the tribespeople enjoyed with the Liberians during their first fifty years on the coast. But by the end of the century external forces were bringing such pressure on Liberia that unless a real authority were exercised over her Kru peoples along the littoral, she would lose even a nominal jurisdiction over much of her territory.

As Africa was parcelled out among the great powers, Liberia made her claims for a length of coast and its hinterland which, in fact, she was not able to make secure against British and French counter-claims. For example, she claimed the area in which all the Kru peoples lived, but the French in the Ivory Coast claimed part of the same region, including Cape Palmas and as far as Garraway. Had the claim really been pressed, Maryland and the Grebos would have been swallowed up. Fortunately, the French moderated their hunger and drew the line at Cavalla (26 October 1891), taking possession of the Kru Coast between the San Pedro and Cavalla Rivers.

It may have seemed to the natives that this was the effective end of Liberian rule in the area, or at least that Liberian morale was

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[1] F.O. 367/184, Memorial of Grebo Chiefs, 15 February 1910.

at a low ebb and Monrovia might safely be ignored. At any rate, the excitement of the French advance was too much for them; the Grebos took up arms soon after the Treaty between France and Liberia was concluded on 8 December 1892. They attacked the Americo-Liberian settlements around Harper and this, the "Third Grebo War," only came to and end with the arrival of the Republic's armed steamer "Gorronomah" and of land forces under General R.A. Sherman. Four years later, there was another less serious rising, and more Liberians were killed.[1]

By the time of this war the Kru peoples of Liberia, of whom the Grebos formed a section, were becoming dependent on European trade up and down the Coast, chiefly because they found employment as crew men with the shipping lines. The Grebos (known also as G'debos, Gedebos, or Glebos) had originally moved southwest to the Coast, according to tradition, from the Western Sudan.[2] Together with other sub-groups, the Krus, the Bassas, and the Des,[3] they made up the Kru population of a stretch of the Guinea Coast. Two authorities on Africa at the turn of the century have left reliable accounts of their value then. According to Sir Harry Johnston, they were the first free labourers to engage voluntarily

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1 Johnston, op. cit., p. 286.

2 Liberia, Traditional History, op. cit., p. 2.

3 R.P. Strong, ed., The African Republic of Liberia and the Belgian Congo, Cambridge, Mass., 1930, I, p. 46.

to work for Europeans on the Coast and enlisted in the British Navy (Cape and West Indian squadrons), as well as serving as stevedores and porters with the commercial houses of every nationality.[1] Mary Kingsley said, "You can go and live in West Africa without seeing a crocodile or a hippopotamus or a mountain, but no white man can go there without seeing and experiencing a Kruboy ... Kruboys are, indeed, the backbone of white effort in West Africa ..."[2] Sir Harry Johnston expressed no great respect for their courage; he said that although they resisted every effort of the Liberian Government to maintain law and order in their country and to prevent the pillaging of wrecked ships, they generally gave way before resolute action on the part of the Liberian militia.[3] Although the same opinion was expressed by others, it was a fact that they had never allowed themselves to be victims of the slave trade, and they have been regarded as a hardy, virile, and industrious people.[4]

Young men of the four sub-groups, lumped together as Krus, were commonly hired on by vessels sailing down the Coast. The vessel would anchor at a favoured town and take on as many men as

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1 Johnston, op. cit., p. 294.

2 M.H. Kingsley, West African Studies, London, 1901, p. 46.

3 Johnston, op. cit., p. 294.

4 Strong, op. cit., p. 46.

were needed to supplement or replace the European crew. When the vessel sailed back up towards Europe the men would be landed at their own town with their wages.[1]

Of the sub-groups, the Krus depended altogether on work at sea, but the Grebos were devoted to hunting, farming, and fishing as well.[2] Property was vested in the family group and was administered by the head of the family as trustee for all. Whatever profit could be made with the assistance of members of the family became family property. When the young Krus came back from sea the family head tried to get as much of their money as he could, according to Mary Kingsley, and the youth, in order to keep some for himself, usually bought cotton cloth and made it into shirts and trousers.[3] These, being personal property, were respected by the family elder as the money was not.

The young Krus, those young enough to work hard, had no rights and their duty was to support the two superior-aged groups, the old men and the middle-aged men.

The oldest age-group was known as Gueckbade, and had two presidents. One, the Bodio or religious king, ruled in time of

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1 Later, as Monrovia tightened its grip over its littoral, these Krus were recruited chiefly at Freetown and Monrovia.

2 Strong, op. cit., p. 50.

3 Kingsley, op. cit., p. 367.

peace; the Worabanah had charge in time of war. The Bodio seems to have acted as a priest of prosperity and comfort, while the Worabanah, a warrior king, was a stage towards being a secular monarch.[1]

The military men were the Sedibo, the middle-aged, with again a religious and a secular president, and the bottom tier was the Kurbo,[2] the young men, the Kruboys:

> Known in West Africa as the under-workers in all hard work, as seamen, servants, steward's helpers, in anything but clerking; they have to go and work and get money and what they call learn sense, until they have enough of these things, and are old enough to go back to their country and settle down as Sedibo. The young Kurbo have at home a roughish time of it, their only friend is their mother, and they have to work at home as well as abroad, for no slaves are kept by the Kru people ...

said Mary Kingsley at the end of the 19th century.[3]

In considering the Grebo situation it is reasonable to keep in mind the attitudes and reactions of the Kru peoples as a whole, for certainly common ideas did permeate among them all. Christianity did not spread much among the Kru subdivision, and it is only the Grebos who seemed to welcome and profit by the efforts of the missionaries; but in political affairs, in their attitudes

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[1] Kingsley, op. cit., p. 447. According to Liberia, Traditional History, op. cit., pp. 42-6, the founder of each town became its Wodoba or King and the office was hereditary. This corresponds to Kingsley's Worabanah. Today this office-holder is called Paramount-Chief. The Bodio lived a life hedged about with almost intolerable taboos.

[2] According to Liberia, Traditional History, op. cit., p. 53, these unmarried youths are the Kinibo, and the age group below them who keep the villages tidy and carry messages are the Chiennbo.

[3] Kingsley, op. cit., p. 447.

towards the Liberian government, which was imposed on them as much as France imposed her "pacification" on the tribes of the Ivory Coast (though by no means as thoroughly), the Kru peoples had much in common.

Mary Kingsley obviously loved the Krus, and she made a moving appeal for them when she said:

> The Kruboy is indeed a sore question to all old Coasters. They have devoted themselves to us English, and they have suffered, laboured, fought, been massacred, and so on with us for generation after generation. Many a time Krumen have come to me when we have been together in foreign possessions and said, 'Help us, we are Englishmen!'[1]

Certainly the attachment they felt to British shipping interests made the Krus look to Britain for protection against the demands of the Liberian Government, which wished to tap their wealth.

By the middle of the century, and possibly much earlier, vessels not only stopped to take on Kru labour but landed goods and carried on trade. In many places there were actually trading posts built with permanent European factors.

In 1862 the Liberian government gave warning that ports of entry would be limited shortly and customs dues levied. According to Johnston, there were to be only six ports of entry--at the following towns (or within three miles of them): Robertsport (Cape Mount),

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1 Kingsley, op. cit., p. 47.

Monrovia, Marshall, Grand Basá, Greenville (Sino), and Cape Palmas.[1] The Krus, through the members of the tribe living in "Kru Town", in Freetown, Sierra Leone, called upon Governor Blackhall of the Colony to intervene.[2] They complained that the law of 1862 ordered

> that all foreign merchant vessels trading along the coast of Liberia are allowed to collect their debts for the period of two years, after which they are not allowed to trade in the said coast excepting the parts which are now belonging to the Liberian Government that which shall be hereafter.

But, protested the Krus, "our territory is free and independent from the Republic," and they would be grateful to have the Governor bring this to Liberia's attention.

The Governor, perhaps, would have enjoyed doing just that, for two years before he had warned the Imperial Government of the menace to British trade were they "hastily to recognize as part of the Liberian Republic countries over which they can exercise no effective control ..."

The Governor had a communication also from the European traders who were exasperated to find that the natives were refusing to let them remove their trade goods as required by the new law--unless they landed more goods at the same time. "The Liberian Government are quite unable to protect us in the removal of our

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[1] Johnston, op. cit., p. 248.

[2] C.O. 267/283, Governor's despatch with enclosures, 2 February 1865.

property or to compel the natives to deliver it up."

The third request the Governor received was from the Liberian Government, requesting the loan of a cruiser to overawe the natives and relieve the traders of anxiety. Although Dr. Blyden, then Liberian Secretary of State, expressed the view that this request was amply covered by Earl Russell's promise of any assistance necessary in upholding the laws of Liberia, the Governor declined to act on his own responsibility and referred the matter home.

The Liberians may have succeeded in drawing the traders to their ports of entry, but native resistance to Monrovia's initiative showed no signs of dwindling in the following decades. The Krus did not permit Liberian traders or officials in their towns and they resisted the payment of taxes.

They continued to trade with the vessels which gave them employment, and as Monrovia faltered and struggled on from year to year the Krus were, on the whole, able to do as they pleased. They were not tamed and brought to heel until this century, and by then their quarrel with Monrovia was part of a larger problem. Was Liberia to exist as an independent Negro republic? And if she was, how was it to be made possible?

By the turn of the century international pressures on the Republic had become intense. In 1904 Arthur Barclay, born and bred in the British West Indies, was inaugurated President and could undertake to bring his country abreast of the times. He had a vision of a united nationalistic Liberia which could hold her independence against the imperialistic ambitions of the British and French Colonial Offices. Fortunately, he found sympathy for his aims in the British Foreign Office, which since 1901 had been determined to support Liberian independence lest she and her trade potential be swallowed up by France and Germany.[1]

Barclay's plea to his countrymen was to catch up with world trends by visiting the neighbouring colonies and taking stock of their situation. Liberians no longer had all the time in the world to expand in Africa, for now the European powers coveted the ownerless territories of the continent and Liberia would be doing well to hold on to her own unexploited interior. To preserve their independence, settlers and natives must make common cause and put Liberia first. Yet in fact the settlers who went to tribal areas came to "turn Vey, Golah, Bassa or Kru and endeavour to obstruct orders and authority of Government in a most treasonable way."[2]

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[1] For a full account of Britain's attitude to Liberia during this period see D.M. Foley, "British Policy in Liberia, 1862-1912," an unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London.

[2] F.O. 367/65, Message of President of Liberia to the 30th Legislature, 11 December 1906.

More dangerous for the country, Barclay believed, was the attitude of the outside world. The philanthropic wave which had moved the European world to give help to Africa was ebbing, and Liberia, a suspect nation in the world's eyes, might find that, far from being able to command favours, she was barely able to beg an equality of opportunity.[1]

Barclay was well aware that his country might expect little sympathy from France, which considered the Republic an anomaly in civilized Africa and felt that most of it should be absorbed into her own colonies of Guinea and the Ivory Coast. Britain and the United States had countered this trend by a declaration in March 1897 expressing interest in the continued independence of Liberia.[2] Despite this, French expansion was continuing, and since it engendered a consequent turmoil amongst the tribal peoples on the fringes of Sierra Leone, the Colonial Office became interested. In May 1904 the Colonial Office suggested to the Foreign Office that Britain might join with France in maintaining the nominal integrity of Liberia, while dividing the hinterland between themselves and taking over the financial direction of the coastal strip which would be all that was left to the Republic.[3] However, the Foreign Office, under Lord Lansdowne,

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1 F.O. 367/65, Message of President of Liberia to the 30th Legislature, 11 December 1906.

2 F.O. 47/38, Minute of 5 February 1903.

3 F.O. 367/65, Memorandum of A.W. Clarke, 21 January 1907.

was against annexation which, whatever its merits, was simply not politic because of the opposition which would come from Germany and the United States.

At this point the Foreign Office perceived that something might be done for Liberia with the knowledge and help of Sir Harry Johnston, who was enthusiastic about the commercial possibilities of Liberia and had a certain amount of faith in the Liberian people themselves. He had gained direction of British commercial interests which became known, after their reorganization in 1903-4, as The Liberian Rubber Corporation and The Liberian Development Chartered Company. The first was intended to exploit wild and plantation rubber, while the latter had mining concessions in Montserrado and Maryland Counties along with concessions for general banking, railways, and telegraphs. While obtaining concessions, Sir Harry had established very friendly relations with the Liberian Government during the summer of 1904,[1] and it seemed that through his agreements the Foreign Office might reorganize Liberian finances. If British officials could take charge of the Customs, and an assured income from them be put into honest hands, a new international loan might be negotiated to clear off all old liabilities.

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[1] R. Oliver, Sir Harry Johnston and the Scramble for Africa, London, 1957, p. 342.

French co-operation, though invited, was refused; France had no interest in propping up the Negro Republic.[1] In fact, according to Elder Dempster (Sir Alfred Jones), there was a prospect of all Liberia, valuable from his point of view for its Kru labour, falling into their hands.[2] French views were so hostile that by the end of 1904 it was believed that Sir Harry Johnston's two companies would be robbed of their vast concessions in Maryland County by a new drawing of the Ivory Coast boundary.[3]

In the spring of 1905 Dr. Edward W. Blyden[4] came to Europe to negotiate a final settlement of the Liberian-Ivory Coast border. He also requested, in the name of President Barclay, an Anglo-French joint protectorate over the Republic which was financially ruined and terrified of a German conquest. Britain offered instead skilled assistance in financial matters and general moral support.[5] Despite

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1 F.O. 367/65, Clarke to Sir F. Bertie in Paris, 3 June 1907.

2 F.O. 47/38, Elder Dempster to F.O., 22 June 1904.

3 F.O. 47/39, Memorandum, 19 May, 1905.

4 Edward Wilmot Blyden was born in 1832 in St. Thomas in the Danish West Indies and came to Liberia when he was nineteen. After serving in Liberia as an educator he served at various times as Minister of the Interior, Secretary of State, and Vice-President. He was for a time employed by the Sierra Leone Government as Supervisor of Muslim Education. As Liberian Ambassador to Great Britain and France, as well as personal agent of President Barclay, he spent much time in Europe during the negotiations described here. The British Consul-General in Monrovia (MacDonnell) believed that he was a paid agent of Sir Alfred Jones as well. For an excellent study of him see H.R. Lynch, "Edward W. Blyden, 1832-1912, and Pan-Negro Nationalism," an unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1964.

5 F.O. 367/65, Lord Lansdowne to Sir M. Durand in Washington, 3 March 1905.

the latter, the Cavalla River right into the hinterland was taken as the frontier, thus robbing Liberia of a great deal of territory.

In the matter of a reformed Liberian Customs, the Foreign Office was more successful. In 1906 a loan of £100,000 was obtained from Erlanger & Co., the charges being secured on the Customs Revenue of Liberia. The Foreign Office posted to the controllership of the Customs a Mr. Lamont, an experienced overseas officer, and he immediately effected reforms. However, he was hampered in his duties by the lack of control exerted by the Republic over its ports of entry. He besought the British Government to supply an armed steamer to control the coast.

Despite pressures from the Colonial Office, Sir Edward Grey, who took over the Foreign Office in December 1905, spurned suggestions that Liberia be annexed. He considered that it would for a long time be a drag on any strong Power annexing it, and that it would be most satisfactory all round for President Barclay, "the one honest Liberian with any administrative ability," to be re-elected in the elections of May 1907.[1] As long as Liberia continued to exist, British trade could be protected and extended there, and the Sierra Leone Railway could tap its hinterland, whereas France or Germany would never give such conditions.

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[1] F.O. 367/65, Memorandum of Clarke, 21 January 1907 (comments of Sir E. Grey).

Along the Kru Coast, the ships which made Lamont's job very difficult by stopping where they pleased to load and unload Kru boys and trade goods, were in many cases steamers from Liverpool. The British Government had ignored Liberia's problems in this region until it became politic to assure her stability. Their first move, between 1901 and 1903, was to make regulations for the British subjects who engaged Kru labourers along her coast. They were to pay a certain sum to the British Consul for the Liberian Government for each man taken, plus the Consul's fee, and a bond of £100 left with the Consul. The Consul would be at Cape Palmas and all ships on their way home were to land there and clear themselves with him.

The shipping firms, led by Elder Dempster,[1] opposed the regulations, ostensibly for humanitarian reasons: the ten shilling tax, they assumed, came from the Kru boy's wages and it was too great a percentage on them! Meanwhile, on the Coast, where rumours of French and German ambitions were prevalent, there were elements seeking to involve Britain. Early in 1903 a lawyer came to the Consul with the promise to arrange a coup d'état, overthrow the Government with the aid of 70,000 tribesmen from the interior, and hoist the Union Jack--if he could be assured that the Colonial Office would not repudiate his action.[2] He did not receive his assurance.

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[1] F.O. 47/36, Notice of Regulations and Submissions on Them.

[2] F.O. 47/38, Letter of Consul Wallis to F.O., 16 April 1903.

Under Lamont, even without a firm control of the Coast, annual customs receipts rose from around £37,000 in 1905 to £55,000 in 1906, and the probability could be seen that with the Kru Coast under control and smuggling stopped they might be doubled.[1] Sir Alfred Jones and his companies (the African Steamship Company, British and American Steam Navigation Company, and Elder Dempster) had to be made to co-operate with the Customs Service. A specific case of violation was described by Lamont (on leave in Dundee) on 19 October 1906, when he asked the Foreign Office to take up the case.[2] The incident took place in June when Captain Denny of the S.S. "Ancobra" landed eight barrels of rum at Rock Town, near Cape Palmas. It was landed in the ship's boat, and when the customs officers tried to seize it they were frustrated by the threatening attitude of the natives. Lamont arrived at Cape Palmas a few days after and ordered his officials to take proceedings against the ship on her homeward voyage. In September she returned to Cape Palmas and the customs officials boarded her. The Captain defied them, carried them two hundred miles to Monrovia, where he dropped them, and then cleared out for home. Sir Alfred Jones and his Companies by such tactics were costing the Liberian Government at least £50,000 a year in lost revenues!

The Foreign Office immediately wrote to Sir Alfred setting

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1 F.O. 367/65, Sir H. Johnston to F.O., 19 March 1907.

2 F.O. 367/66, Lamont to F.O., 19 October 1906.

out the offence,[1] pointing out that H.M. Government were interested in the efficient management of the Liberian Customs Service, for which purpose it had loaned them officers, and did not wish British trading interests to collide with those of Liberia.

A week later Sir Alfred appeared at the Foreign Office to discuss the matter.[2] He said that the Captain of the "Ancobra" would certainly be punished, but that his vessels had always had the habit of calling for Kru boys at the ports of Garraway, Cesstown, Picanniny Cess, Grand Cess, Rock Town, Nifu, Baffou, Wappo, Fishtown--none of which were ports of entry--yet he did not wish to seem to be deserting these people, some 12,000 of them, "who depended for the most part for their subsistence on the employment they obtained on his steamers."

The Foreign Office, anxious for a compromise solution but doubtful that Liberia should be asked to add to her eleven ports of entry,[3] wished Sir Alfred could be persuaded to help reform the Republic instead of simply despising it. If he would co-operate with the Customs and assist Liberia to move ahead the Liberians would in turn (thought the Foreign Office) do all they could to please him. Sir Alfred continued stubbornly hostile,[4] Captain Denny of the "Ancobra"

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1 F.O. 367/66, F.O. to Sir A. Jones, 14 November 1906.

2 F.O. 371/187, Political Liberian Development Scheme, 1906.

3 F.O. 371/187, F.O. Minute of 26 November 1906.

4 F.O. 371/187, Jones to F.O., 24 November 1906.

was promoted, and the Elder Dempster ships continued to call where they pleased. As if that were not enough, these ships were landing rum or other raw spirits, on occasion 300-600 barrels of 20 gallons each, which was, as Lamont said, "a breach of international law of an aggravated type,"[1] since it violated the terms of the Brussels Convention which controlled the West African spirit traffic by fixing the rate of duty for the various Powers. Woermann & Co. of Hamburg acted quite differently, their ships being absolutely prohibited from carrying on this trade.

Lamont demanded that Elder Dempster cease these illegal activities, which ruined the prestige of the British Government and prevented Lamont from making the progress the Foreign Office desired. The German traders were complaining to him of the ruin of their trade at Sass Town when quantities of rice and rum were smuggled in by the S.S. "Batanga" and the S.S. "Abeokuta," while Lamont had, in addition, evidence against the Elder Dempster steamers "Sobo," "Boulama," and "Chama." When H.M.S. "Dwarf" carried Lamont along the coast to visit his customs stations, it spotted more steamers calling at Grand Sesters, which was not a port of entry, to load and unload Kru boys.[2] Since a number of new ports had been opened at Sir Alfred Jones's request, he was summoned to the Foreign Office for a discussion once again.

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1 F.O. 367/66, Lamont to F.O. per Consul Wallis, 3 June 1907.

2 F.O. 367/65, Lt. Comm. MacLean to Admiralty, 20 April 1907.

Anxious for Sir Alfred's full co-operation, the Foreign Office conceded the possibility of opening a few more ports, such as "Grand Sess" (sic) which Jones preferred to Garraway (already open) since the bulk of the Kru boys he hired were recruited in the former place.[1] After conferring with his fellow members of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, Jones asked that Sasstown and Grand Cess be added to the thirteen open ports.[2] He warned all his captains against going into other ports on pain of instant dismissal.

During 1907 the Foreign Office took as its objectives for Liberia: first, the securing of a gunboat to patrol the coast, strengthen the hands of the Customs officers, and so get the money needed for development. Second, they wished to follow this up with the appointment of an English treasurer who would properly use the money collected by Lamont. Expenditures would include the setting up of a constabulary under English officers, and then, with control of the finances and armed strength, "we should practically have secured the country without incurring either expense or nominal responsibility."[3] However, an essential element in the plan was the gift of a gunboat to the Liberian Government, and though the Admiralty was ready to release to them H.M.S. "Alert," laid up at Bermuda, the Treasury was demanding

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1 F.O. 367/65, Jones to F.O., 14 June 1907.

2 F.O. 367/66, Jones to F.O., 11 July 1907.

3 F.O. 367/65, Memorandum of Clarke, 21 January 1907.

that Liberia pay £7,500, a sum considered quite beyond her means.

Despite an apparent rise in anti-European sentiment at Monrovia[1] where people were disturbed by the authoritarian trend under President Barclay, he was re-elected in May for a four-year term,[2] with his amended constitution accepted. In August he arrived in England and during his talks at the Foreign Office was presented with three requests: that he appoint an English official to control Liberia's finances, that he establish an armed force of police under English officers, and that the judicial system be reformed by English appointees.[3] Barclay said he was willing to try to implement the suggested reforms because they would be good for his country. On his way home he called on Governor Probyn at Freetown, hoping that there could be more co-operation.[4] He was rebuffed by the Governor, who was apparently "ill and unnerved,"[5] and Barclay failed to win him as an ally.

Following Barclay's return, the Liberian public accepted the Franco-Liberian Treaty, the agreement with Erlanger & Co., and Sir Harry Johnston's Development Company proposals, and in February 1908

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1 F.O. 367/65, Wallis to Grey, 22 January 1907.

2 F.O. 367/65, Wallis to F.O., 23 May 1907.

3 F.O. 367/66, F.O. to C.O., 27 August 1907, and Memorandum enclosed.

4 F.O. 367/66, President Barclay to Clarke, 16 November 1907.

5 F.O. 367/66, C.O. to F.O., 9 December 1907.

the Legislature sanctioned the creation of a frontier force under British officers, along with an addition of three British officers to the Customs Service. They did not, however, put the Treasury under British guidance.[1] Unfortunately, the immediate result of the creation of the Frontier Force under Major Cadell and other British officers was that the Liberians, suspicious of what the force might be used for, allowed their racial fears to develop and their leader, Vice-President Dossen, became anti-British, anti-Barclay, and pro-German.

Whatever the Americo-Liberians may have feared, the Kru peoples along the Coast evidently felt that a better day was dawning when British officials appeared in the Customs Service and British officers in the Frontier Force.

When the cruiser "Dwarf" brought Lamont along the coast in April 1907, her Commander, Lt. Comm. MacLean, was struck by the pro-British sentiments displayed, and commented on it in his report to the Admiralty.[2] The people at Grand Cess, he said,

> are remarkably intelligent, almost every adult speaking English, they all evinced a strong desire to become British subjects, and freely expressed their antipathy towards the Liberians, saying that they never knew their country was in Liberia before, and that no Liberians had ever visited that country ...

On being told that a Liberian Customs House was to be set up, they were

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[1] F.O. 458/10, Consul-General Baldwin's Report on 1909, p. 48.

[2] F.O. 367/65, MacLean to Admiralty, 20 April 1907.

annoyed, and said they would pay taxes to the King of England, if asked, but not to the Liberians. "On visiting the huts of several of the Headmen, portraits of the Royal Family were conspicuous, the natives taking a keen delight in pointing them out to us."

When the "Dwarf" called at Cess Town (Sasstown) the people were even more outspoken: if the Liberian flag were hoisted there, they would pull it down; if the Liberians came, they would drive them out, for they were well armed with modern rifles. They said the only people they would obey were the British.

Ironically, it was the British who, through the Customs Service and the gunboat they sold to Liberia, gave the Liberians the strength to bring the Krus under control.

In December 1908 the revenue cutter "Lark" under a British commander went into service. But the difficulties of making the chief Kru towns ports of entry remained, because of their hostility to Liberia. Moreover, the Krus were unwilling to travel to the open towns to look for jobs because of the tribal feuds by which their country was riven. So a season of doldrums set in, with the ships unable to obtain labour and the Krus unable to get the goods on which they had become dependent.

Then the Liberian Legislature decided to make some examples and punish the Kru towns of Grand Cess, Sasstown, and Garraway by heavy fines. If they did not pay they were "to be bombarded and

demolished, and all communications of egress and ingress to be cut off."[1] Such were the heady effects of having a gunboat at their disposal at last.

The British Consul-General made haste to inform President Barclay that the power Britain had supplied could not be abused in this way--so a lighter means of coercion was sought. It was tested on the inhabitants of Grand Cess. When the returning natives from that area landed at Cape Palmas (then the nearest port of entry) they were imprisoned, fined, and their belongings taken.

The British Government protested, and in June 1909 this policy was discontinued. Instead, at the suggestion of the British Government, Lamont went to Grand Cess in July of that year and persuaded the Krus to let it be a port of entry for customs purposes. He respected their sensibilities by placing an educated Kru man in charge.

Six months later Lamont had done the same at Sasstown (with a white officer in charge) and thus the two ports Sir Alfred Jones and the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce had asked to be opened back in July 1907 were now legal ports of entry for the Elder Dempster steamers. Sasstown, with a population of 15,000, was the largest Kru settlement in the Republic.

By that time Lamont's position as a representative of Great

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[1] F.O. 458/10, Baldwin's Report on 1909, p. 51.

Britain's determination to remould Liberia into an efficient and stable state had been seriously undermined by the events taking place in the capital at the beginning of the year. During 1908 Consul Wallis and Major Cadell had allowed their enthusiasm for reform to outstrip their instructions, Liberia's financial resources, and the good faith the Liberian public was prepared to give them. A violent reaction set in against trusting British personnel with power, blasting the hope of the Foreign Office that "Liberia was to develop on parallel lines to Sierra Leone, and oppose a vigorous British civilization to the advance of the French."[1] On 13 January 1909 the Liberian Legislature appointed a Liberian, Colonel Lomax, to command the Frontier Force and so forestall the coup they feared was planned. Under Wallis's direction, the British officers and N.C.O.'s prepared to depart, taking with them the arms and equipment of the Force. H.M.S. "Mutine" was sent from Ascension and on 12 February took on all British and Sierra Leonean officers and men.[2]

Not only did British prestige fall but with it fell the influence of Barclay, and elements hostile to Britain and hopeful of gaining something from the United States came to the fore. A Commission came from the United States in May 1909 to inquire into Liberia's difficulties preparatory to formulating recommendations for American help. Vice-President Dossen with his German sympathies continued to ride high, and under his direction

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1 F.O. 403/390, Memorandum respecting Liberia, February 1908.

2 F.O. 458/10, Consul's Report for 1909, p. 49.

the Senate and House set to tear up every existing contract or arrangement involving British interests.[1]

During 1909, therefore, the Kru peoples, who had believed that Britain was taking an interest in them[2] and, even if she helped the Liberians restrict their old freedom, would see that justice was done to them, had their hopes dashed. The Liberians, in possession now of a gunboat to enforce the efforts of the improved Customs Service, had much greater coercive power than for some time. Happily, they were not able to abuse their power while Lieut. Buggé commanded the "Lark." This was illustrated when in August 1909 a rising was provoked at River Cess, a town of mixed Krus and Bassas which had been a port of entry for some years, and ended in a humiliating defeat for the Liberian Government.[3]

In the Grebo country around Cape Palmas events at the end of 1909 were inciting another outburst. As the British Consul reported some months later, the Grebos "hate and despise the Liberians, whom they look upon as outcasts, and as they are clever enough to see that they cannot remain independent, they openly state their wish to be placed under the protection of Great Britain."[4] A particular cause of resentment, according to Sharpe, a sub-inspector of Customs, was the long-standing record of brutality towards the aborigines, especially that

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1 F.O. 458/11, Consul's Report for 1910, p. 1.

2 F.O. 458/10, Consul's Report for 1909, p. 50.

3 F.O. 458/10, Consul's Report for 1909, p. 51.

4 F.O. 458/10, Baldwin to Grey, 13 April 1910.

of Thorne, the Superintendant of Maryland County.[1]

The details of the war (the "Fourth Grebo War") as derived from various sources are confused and conflicting. One account blamed Colonel Lomax, a notorious Americo-Liberian commanding the Nyemowe section, for arresting the Chief of Gbolobo unjustifiably. In the struggle which ensued between the townspeople and the soldiers three of the latter were killed.[2] Another account suggests that there was a land dispute about thirty miles up the Cavalla River between two groups of Grebos, each of whom wanted the plots of land now vacant, since their owners, living on the other side of the river, had become French subjects and could no longer come across to work them. They could have quibbled about it fairly peacefully for years had not Colonel Lomax taken it upon himself to intervene by sending a squad of soldiers to bring the chiefs to him. On entering the village (presumably Gbolobo) the soldiers (apparently Mendis recruited by Major Cadell) began to press their attentions on the Grebo women, as was their wont, and their husbands and fathers objected. The soldiers began shooting and killed one of the Chief's sons. They were then attacked with fury, three were killed, and the rest fled into the bush.[3]

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1 F.O. 458/10, Baldwin to Grey, 13 April 1910.

2 Liberia, Traditional History, op. cit., p. 167.

3 F.O. 458/11, Baldwin to F.O., 15 January 1910.

Lomax and his staff fled to Harper and aroused a general expectation there of a widespread Grebo revolt. When the news reached Monrovia, two members of the Government went to Cape Palmas but the Grebos would not talk to them, and on their return sixty soldiers were despatched on the "Lark." Before the Paramount Chief of the area affected could reach Cape Palmas to explain matters, a Grebo priest of the Episcopal Church, B.K. Speare, was shot and killed on the veranda of his house there. The Grebos claimed he had been killed by a Liberian, the Liberians said it had been done by a Grebo, and the native population fled from the town over the river to Hoffman Station.[1] A German gunboat which appeared on the scene offered to bombard Hoffman Station and Paduke,[2] but thought better of it and took no action.

At this point a memorial[3] was addressed to the British Government by "King Gynde and Chiefs of the Grebos" at Bigtown, Cape Palmas, asking them to take over their country and govern it. The whole course of their history was related to show how they had always been discriminated against and oppressed. Not only did they claim to have been the innocent party in their wars against the Liberians, but they claimed that individual Grebos were often shot down in the towns or the bush without any investigations leading to the discovery of the

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1 F.O. 458/10, Baldwin to Grey, quoting Sharpe, Sub-Inspector of Customs, 13 April 1910.

2 F.O. 367/184, Report from the Globe, 30 March 1910.

3 F.O. 367/184, Memorial of Grebo Chiefs, 15 February 1910 (see p. 14). They requested that a reply be sent to the Chief of Kablake by way of Blieron, French Ivory Coast.

murderers. As for the customs duty "on the little earnings which owing to the backward condition of the country we are compelled to go abroad in search of," the unjust and illegal way in which it was being levied "leaves us perpetually in a state of chronic poverty."

They felt they owed the Liberians no thanks for having brought them good government. In fact, "they are utterly powerless to put to a stop our inter-tribal wars which we ourselves are helpless to prevent, and by means of which our best blood is destroyed in recurring years." The Chiefs actually believed the Liberians encouraged inter-tribal strife.

Finally, the Chiefs spoke of their current difficulties:

> ... the Liberians at this moment are engaged in war with the Grebo tribe at Cape Palmas, which is a part of the great labour-supply people--the Krus--the cause of which is that the aforenamed tribe is being held responsible for the alleged misdeeds of an allied tribe on the Cavalla River, which latter tribe, as the Liberians allege[,] fired upon the Frontier Police Force of the Liberian Government. The truth of the matter, however, is that this execrable Force is entirely demoralized and whenever they have been sent throughout the country--whether to River Cess, or into the Hinterland--their custom has been to plunder the towns through which they pass, and to rape their women. This practice they exhibited on the Cavalla River, and moreover shot a man of a tribe, thus forcing this tribe[,] whose chief they had been sent to call, to take measures for their own defence which resulted in three of the frontier soldiers being killed. Now the Cape Palmas Grebos being in alliance with this tribe, the Liberians allege their complicity in a matter which may be clearly seen to have come up on the spur of a moment. Thus, two Grebo youths living among the Liberians[,] both engaged in their occupations[,] the one a Preacher, and the other as a tailor[1]--were killed on the spot by the Liberians.

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[1] "Tailor Kilbu", like Speare a leading Grebo, was chased into the sea and drowned, according to a Reuters report in the Globe, 30 March 1910. (F.O. 367/184)

The Chiefs explained that for self-protection they had erected stockades around the town, which was interpreted by the Liberians as a provocation and led them to attack them at night on 11 February.

It was obvious that the object in founding Liberia had not been gained; instead of enlightenment she radiated oppression and demoralization, which the Grebos fully realized. However, they also recognized "the high qualities of the President of Liberia, and that he has been doing his utmost to fight against the corrupt state of affairs in the country" though against crippling opposition.

The memorial concluded with a plea for the British Crown to take over their country, the only alternative being a continuation of horrors "in a sense exceeded only by the Congo atrocities," with the Grebos decimated not only by the Liberians but by inter-tribal warfare--" ... our appeal is ... to the British sense of humanity, good government, and the right."

A few days later one of the British sub-inspectors of Customs wrote to Consul Baldwin describing the situation.[1] He had hastened to Cape Palmas from Grand Cess when he heard of the fighting. On Saturday and Sunday, 12 and 13 February, bullets were whistling in all directions both day and night. On the night of 17/18 February the "Lark" bombarded the Grebo towns, and on 19 February a Liberian gun being pushed towards

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[1] F.O. 458/11, Sharpe from Cape Palmas, 20 February, enclosed in Baldwin's to F.O., 1 March 1910.

Cuttington had to be withdrawn when the Grebos made a foray to capture it.

The fixed Liberian guns on the Cape were keeping up a steady bombardment, but there were no efforts at sending troops out--they awaited reinforcements from Monrovia. The Cavalla River was being left to the Grebos, but the "Lark" was being sent to bombard "Gravy" (Garraway) and "Half Gravy." The Customs House was continuing to function, but with a skeleton staff. Their boat was fired on while landing boys from the ship "Venus," whereupon the "Lark" and the fixed guns shelled the enemy positions. The rumour was that the Grebos had two armed cannon.

By early March accounts of the war were causing uneasiness in Liverpool, where the firms were concerned about their factories at Cape Palmas,[1] and in the United States, for the Liberian Government had told them that their missionaries were in danger.[2]

By this time it was becoming highly doubtful that Liberia could pay off the Erlanger loan commitments,[3] especially because the Legislature had voted $40,000 for war expenses against the Grebos.

The ship "Salaga," bound home along the coast, reported the alarming news at Freetown that the Grebos were sniping at all the

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1 F.O. 367/184, letter from W.D. Woodin & Co., 5 March 1910, and from Chamber of Commerce in Liverpool, 9 March 1910.

2 F.O. 367/184, F.O. Minute.

3 F.O. 458/10, Baldwin to F.O., 14 February 1910.

European factories as a protest against the Republic, and that the "Lark" seemed powerless to protect the merchants. Sir Edward Grey was so far concerned that he queried Baldwin for confirmation.[1]

Baldwin had no other information at that point than the same report of the captain of the "Salaga." According to this, the customs boat had been fired on when coming to meet the "Salaga" on 10 March, and that a battle followed between the Grebo stockade and the "Lark."[2]

By the time this information was received, on 30 March, the newspapers were already running the story as told by the crew and passengers of the "Salaga"[3] and by Reuters. According to the report in the Globe (Reuters) the natives were winning, and in their anxiety for British intervention were willing to kill a few British traders.

They may not have been altogether wrong, for Reeves, a factor for Woodin & Co. at Cape Palmas, wrote to Baldwin on 4 April[4] saying he had

> ... learned at Garraway that it was the strong idea that if the Grebos could succeed in killing three or four Englishmen that this would then force England to interfere and take the country over, just the thing that the natives have wished for many years. The Grebos say they are tired of writing letters to England asking that England takes their country over ...

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1 F.O. 458/11, Grey to Baldwin, 14 March 1910.

2 F.O. 458/11, Baldwin to Grey, 16 March 1910.

3 F.O. 367/184, newspaper clippings from the Globe, etc. Probably the Consul's letter arrived via "Salaga."

4 F.O. 458/10, Reeves to Baldwin, 4 April 1910.

A few days later Reeves had become quite terrified and sent along a letter addressed to the English merchants of Harper, Cape Palmas, from the Grebo Chiefs. It had been mysteriously delivered by a small boy who immediately disappeared.[1] The Grebo letter, dated at Big Town, Cape Palmas, on 22 March, read:

> Gentlemen,
>
> Some months ago we wrote to inform you that without cause the Liberians had killed certain young men of our tribe, and no satisfactory account as to their investigations for the detection of the criminals could be given us by the Liberians, and that if your trade roads were blocked we were not to be blamed for it.
>
> During the war we have tried to respect your national flags as much as possible; but we discover from observations as well as from information, that the Liberians are being benefited by this immunity to the extent that the German flag was seen at the Liberian Government Custom-house, and the Liberians through you enjoy all advantages of marine communication, while we are effectively barred from the same by them. They are now vigorously trying to cut off all our sources of supply, although without any appreciable result, by carrying the Rocktown people and some of their frontier soldiers at the rear of our towns to block our roads to the interior.
>
> In view of all these facts, we should be less than men to sit and allow the Liberians to enjoy all the above mentioned advantages at the same time that they try to starve us out.
>
> Therefore we have to inform you that we intend to intercept their over-sea communication as much as lies in our power to do; and have to inform you accordingly to hold your boats in check, as we no longer wish the Liberians to continue the war through your co-operation.
>
> From date we shall attempt to stop every boat leaving the shore for any marine intercourse with any vessel, either in or outside of the harbour.
>
> We beg, &c.
>
> King Gynde
> (and the Chiefs of the Cape Palmas Grebos)

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[1] F.O. 458/10, Reeves to Baldwin, 6 April 1910.

Reeves, who forwarded this communication, believed that his life was in danger along with his business. He had no faith in the ability of Liberia to suppress the rising, for the "Lark" had exhausted nearly all her ammunition without killing a single person and the Grebos were getting stronger every day.

By this time there was an impression abroad that a general rising was taking place along the Coast, for Senegalese troops were being rushed from Dakar to suppress risings at both ends of the Ivory Coast, while men of the Kru sub-group had invaded and burned trading factories at New Cess. In Washington the State Department was resolved to give the European Powers no excuse for intervention in Liberian affairs[1] and so the U.S.S. "Birmingham" (which was bringing the American Minister, Mr. Lyon, to discuss the Commission's report and American solutions for Liberia's financial problems) was under orders, on its arrival at Monrovia, to assist in dealing with the Grebos.[2] On 12 April she sailed from Monrovia for Cape Palmas, carrying Vice-President Dossen and Attorney-General King.[3]

The Cabinet at Monrovia had not been too well pleased to hear that Commander Fletcher of the "Birmingham" considered that his power could only be used to give moral support. If that were the case, they

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1 F.O. 458/11, Bryce to Grey, 5 April 1910 (extract from New York Tribune, 1 April 1910)

2 U.S. Dept. of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1910, p. 704.

3 F.O. 458/11, Baldwin to Grey, 13 April 1910.

saw little point in his proceeding to the scene of conflict. "Just at this time alarmist reports began to arrive that the position at Cape Palmas was critical, and the President, who is believed to sympathize with the Grebos, was accused of using his influence to keep the ship at Monrovia."[1] So President Barclay had had to ask Commander Fletcher to go to Cape Palmas, taking with him his rival and arch-enemy, Dossen, who was practically dictator of the "Republic of Maryland," which the county still claimed to be on its official seal.

At Cape Palmas a truce was called. The Grebo Chiefs came on board and laid their case before Commander Fletcher. He suggested to Dossen that a regular inquiry be held on board, after which he would advise the American Government as to the proper action to take. Dossen turned down the suggestion: the United States was obliged to assist Liberia (under terms of the 1862 Treaty) and anyway, Dossen refused to be bound by the result of any inquiry. The matter ended there, the relations between the Commander and his chief guest remaining very cool.

In Monrovia, two regiments of militia were being called out in the hope that 1,000 rifles and 200,000 rounds of ammunition promised by Germany would shortly arrive,[2] and by mid-May, 250 militiamen had been carried to Cape Palmas by the "Lark," mobilized by the loan of $20,000 from Messrs. Woermann & Co.[3]

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1 F.O. 458/11, Baldwin to Grey, 1 May 1910.

2 F.O. 458/11, Baldwin to Grey, 1 May 1910.

3 F.O. 458/11, Baldwin to Grey, 21 May 1910.

The Grebos soon asked for terms, being short of supplies.[1] By early June they were dispersing[2] and in August the "Lark" began bringing home the Liberian militia.[3] On 26 August she brought home the last contingent, and on the following day the German steamer "Alexander Woermann" brought the Government officials and eight Grebo Chiefs as prisoners of war.[4]

Even after the fighting stopped the Grebos suffered, according to the British Consul:

> Those who live in the immediate neighbourhood of the town of Harper have lost a number of their cattle ... killed by the Monrovia militia after peace had been declared. These men, when there was no further chance of being shot at, seem to have got entirely out of hand, and their behaviour was the cause of a remonstrance from the Commander of the United States cruiser "Des Moines" to Vice-President Dossen. This officer does not appear to get on with the Liberians any better than did his predecessor, Captain Fletcher of the "Birmingham," and I hear that he told the Vice-President that the militia were an undisciplined and useless rabble, and a disgrace to the Government which dressed them up as soldiers.[5]

Baldwin had already reported:

> President Barclay realizes perfectly well that, whatever may be the result of the present operations, the Grebos are eventually bound to succeed. They are a more virile and a more prolific race than the Creoles, and he acknowledges that it is ridiculous to expect them to continue to submit to the rule of an enfeebled and rapidly decreasing minority.[6]

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1 F.O. 458/11, Consul's Report for 1910, p. 19.

2 F.O. 458/11, Baldwin to Grey, 13 June 1910.

3 F.O. 458/11, Acting-Consul Parks to Grey, 16 August 1910.

4 F.O. 367/184, Parks to F.O., 30 August 1910.

5 F.O. 458/11, Baldwin to Grey, 13 June 1910.

6 F.O. 458/11, Baldwin to Grey, 1 May 1910.

Baldwin was of the opinion that the risings against the Liberian Government were more symptomatic of a general attitude than of particular causes.

> The natives are utterly weary of the Liberians, of the insolence of their officials, of the behaviour of their troops in respect to their women, of their assumption of superiority, and of their interference with local methods of government and tribal traditions. I hold no brief for the native of the country; he is a coward, a thief, and a bully when he gets the opportunity, but he is no worse, and is possibly a little better, in these respects, than the Liberians who try to govern him; he has had much to endure at their hands, and throughout the country where the Liberians have come into intimate contact with the aborigine, a general feeling seems to have sprung up that endurance has reached its limit.
>
> I had intended to ask you by telegraph for permission to go to Cape Palmas, so that I might be able to report on the situation from personal knowledge, but when I mentioned the possibility to the President he begged me not to go. Dr. Blyden, when he visited the Liberian coast last year, is reported, rightly or wrongly, to have told the Krus and Grebos that the republic was on its last legs, and that the best thing they could do was to ask Great Britain to annex their country. The Grebos have made no secret of their wish to come under English rule, and the President said that if I went there all sorts of rumours would arise about the intentions of Great Britain, and hinted his position would be made even more difficult than it is at present.[1]

Barclay believed that the Grebos had been provoked into rebellion by the treatment they received from the Cape Palmas officials. He issued a public rebuke in these words:

> The County of Maryland contains many persons whose views and ideas with respect to the native population it is both impossible to approve or to carry out ... Less hauteur of the wrong sort, less of the assumption of a superiority which does not exist ... would render the task of the administration much easier.[2]

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1 F.O. 458/11, Baldwin to Grey, 23 April 1910.

2 F.O. 458/11, Consul's Report for 1910, p. 20.

WILLIAM WADE HARRIS

One of the most ardent Grebo nationalists in 1910 and the years before was William Wade Harris[1], Episcopalian catechist and teacher in the school at Half Garraway. If he was present when Dr. Blyden announced that the Republic was on its last legs he must have rejoiced. He himself was well known in the villages around Harper, where he went not only to preach the Word of God but to inflame resentment against the Liberian authorities and to tell his fellow-tribesmen that they, the rightful owners of the land, had the right to rule it themselves or, if they wished, invite whom they would to rule them.[2]

Harris's background was not a distinguished one, yet he had enjoyed advantages through life which put him in an in-between world, a world a step away from that experienced by the vast majority of Africans at that time. He was born about 1865[3] and although his Grebo parents were illiterate, their tribe as a whole had had unusual opportunities to become acquainted with European culture.

When the "Ann" had arrived at Cape Palmas it carried the Rev. J.L. Wilson and teachers sent by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, along with the Rev. John Hersley, who built the

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1 Pronounced Waddy.

2 Oral evidence of Rev. J.D. Kwee Baker, Monrovia, 2 July 1963.

3 P. Benoit, "Finding of the Prophet Harris," a typewritten account of interviews with Harris at Cape Palmas, September 1926. It is deposited in the M.M.S. Archives. Hereafter referred to as "Benoit's Report."

first Methodist place of worship, and James M. Thomson, who founded the American Episcopal work there.[1]

In 1837 land was officially provided for the Methodist Episcopal and Protestant Episcopal Missions, and in that year the Rev. Thomas Savage, M.D., Rev. Lancelot B. Minor, and Rev. John Payne, all Episcopal priests, had arrived to begin their work.[2] They formed a well disciplined group, opened schools as well as evangelizing, and soon developed a significant Christian group among the Grebos. In 1842 these missionaries closed the school they had opened for the colonists' children in order to concentrate on the natives, learning their ways and beliefs (at a time when most missionaries believed the African had no system of belief) in order to teach. In 1841 the Rev. Lancelot Minor learned, for example, that he travelled through most tribal areas most successfully when he depended on tribal rules of hospitality rather than carrying huge quantities of supplies and thus putting temptation in the way of people. Despite the progress the missionaries made in getting close to the Grebos, they were affected by the antagonism growing up between the natives and the settlers in 1843. Native children were withdrawn from John Payne's school, no one would sell him food, and he could not get transport to the settlement. By 6 December 1843 the Mission station was in fear of an immediate siege. Fortunately, Payne managed to get a

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1 Liberia, Traditional History, op. cit., p. 142.

2 J.W. Cason, "The Growth of Christianity in the Liberian Environment," an unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1962, p. 140.

message to Commodore Matthew C. Perry who had arrived at Cape Palmas that day, and before midnight the United States marines landed at Cavalla and the next day conveyed the mission staff to Cape Palmas. The natives were naturally much impressed by the power of the missionaries' God and within two months they were invited to take up again the work at Cavalla and other stations. By 1843 the Protestant Episcopal Church had twelve stations altogether, along with boarding schools and teacher training schools.[1] Despite this emphasis on organization, the Episcopal missionaries were, nonetheless, definitely evangelical in their approach, and Savage reported an outpouring of the Holy Spirit beginning on 23 March 1840 "in which adults, children, missionaries, and all present were affected with weeping, praying, and asking for pardon."[2]

Baptist workers had also come during the first years of the colony, and the brig "Harriet," sailing from Baltimore on 20 December 1841, brought two Roman Catholic priests.[3]

The Episcopal missionaries in particular must be given great credit for helping to counteract the disintegrating force they brought into tribal society, the "undermining of parental authority, weakening of traditional sanctions, general alienation of Christian elements from

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1 Cason, op. cit., p. 146.

2 Ibid., p. 149.

3 Eastman, op. cit., p. 58.

the balance of the community and the inculcation of disrespect for traditional African cultures"[1] which took place in all areas where Christian missionaries came, by giving the Grebos a literature in their own tongue.

This work was actually begun by John L. Wilson of the American Board who printed a Grebo dictionary in 1839, followed by publications which included the complete gospels of Matthew and Mark. When in 1843 the Mission withdrew, with their printing press, to Gabon, the Rev. John Payne and his Episcopal Mission carried on the work. By 1842 Payne was conducting parts of the liturgy in Grebo, and later the whole of the Morning and Evening Prayer sections of the Prayer Book, along with the Litany and Psalms. In 1851 Payne was consecrated in Alexandria, Virginia, as the first Bishop of his Church in Liberia, and at Easter 1854 he ordained as deacons the first indigenous Liberians, Ku Sia (Clement F. Jones) and Mu Su (John Musu Minor).[2] On Payne's retirement in 1871 he was succeeded by the Rev. John Gottleib Auer,[3] who was consecrated in the United States on 17 April 1873. Auer had already

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1 J.S. Coleman, Nigeria, Background to Nationalism, London, 1958, p. 100.

2 Handbooks on the Missions of the Episcopal Church, IV, Liberia, New York, 1924, p. 32.

3 Auer, born 18 November 1832 in Europe, came originally to the German Lutheran Mission at Accra (December 1857) and transferred to Liberia where he married (1861) an American missionary, Miss Mary Ball. He died mysteriously in his prime 15 February 1874 at Cape Palmas. His name is altered to "ANNA" in J.J. Cooksey and A. McLeish, Religion and Civilization in West Africa, London, 1931, p. 59.

edited in Grebo portions of the Bible, a history of the Bible, some four hundred hymns, and school books. He seems to have been an indefatigable worker during his twelve years in Liberia, and Liberian tradition states "that his works are easier to read than those of Bishop Payne."[1] At his school (the Hoffman Institute) he taught, all alone, English, German, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Mathematics, Algebra, and Science.[2]

William Wade Harris was never taught by Bishop Auer, but he had read some of his publications, including his history of the Bible.[3] Undoubtedly, the fact that their language was used in church and school and that it was available in print was a source of pride and cohesion to Harris and to his fellow Grebos. Compared to the Krus further west, who had neither missionaries nor schools, they had a better awareness of themselves and of the world from which the settlers and missionaries came. Their own society was disintegrating somewhat, but there were gains to balance the losses in the rising status of the vernacular. In this honourable pride and cohesiveness they were a generation or two ahead of the rest of the continent, and perhaps it was an appreciation of the implicit challenge to their authority which led the Liberian Government (supported by Bishop Auer's successor, the black but American born Bishop Ferguson) to collect the books edited and printed by Auer

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1 Liberia, Traditional History, op. cit., p. 176.

2 Benoit's Report.

3 Benoit's Report.

and burn them or throw them into the sea.[1]

From the time of Bishops Payne and Auer there were a fair number of educated men among the Grebos, including pastors and teachers. An incomplete list of Episcopal priests is noteworthy not only for the fact that these men attained ordination but that they each kept a Grebo name in addition to their Anglicized surnames.[2] S.W. Kla Seton and M.P. Kla Valentine,[3] ordained 1865, head the list, and others include T.C. Brownell Gabla (1886), E. Wade McKrae (1903), B. Kedare Speare (1904), and N. Yuku Valentine, son of Rev. M.P.K. Valentine, who died while still a deacon (about 1907). At this time, according to Sir Harry Johnston, who knew the Liberian peoples well, "the Dès, the great Kpwesi tribe ... and all the Kru peoples remained aloof and attached to the vague fetishistic beliefs which they still profess."[4]

Of course, not all the Grebos had abandoned their traditional faiths; no doubt it is as true among them today as in 1926 when the Harvard Expedition visited them that the less educated lay great stress on the medicine-man and the devil-man or "deya," who is supposed to be able to find out anything and detect wrongdoers.[5]

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1 Benoit's Report.

2 There were formerly no family names among the Grebos.

3 Rev. Valentine's name is given as Keda, not Kla, in a long passage of praise for his mental and moral attainments by his former bishop, C.C. Penick, quoted in Handbooks ... of the Episcopal Church, op. cit.

4 Johnston, op. cit., p. 192.

5 Strong, op. cit., p. 50.

When Wade Harris was about twelve years old he was taken as a ward by the Rev. Jesse Lawry, a Cape Palmas Grebo, probably doing chores for this man in exchange for a home and some instruction. Lawry presided over the Methodist Episcopal School at Lino. He baptized Harris and taught him to read and write in both English and Grebo, though he is said to have been more proficient in the latter.[1]

After a few years Lawry returned to Cape Palmas and Harris went home to work for his father, but as soon as he could leave he took a job on a ship. He made four voyages as a Kru boy, two to Lagos and two to Gabon. Contrary to some accounts, he did not spend years working down the Coast; he did not join the Methodist Church at Lagos and he did no work there for Elder Dempster.

At about the age of 21 he followed his brother into the Methodist Episcopal Church at Cape Palmas, being converted by the Rev. Thompson, a Liberian. From that time on he did some lay preaching while earning his living as a bricklayer. His career as a Methodist preacher must have been brief, for soon after his marriage to Rose Badock Farr (about 1885) he changed his religious allegiance and joined the Protestant Episcopal Church, being confirmed by Bishop Samuel D. Ferguson in 1888. Apparently he was working as a teacher[2] (or wished

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[1] Benoit's Report.

[2] This does not imply great learning on his part. He would be required to teach only the rudiments of primary schooling, perhaps to the fourth year level.

to do so) in the service of the Episcopal Mission from the time of his marriage, and his confirmation was a logical outcome of his ambition for advancement. On 6 May 1892 he was appointed "assistant teacher and catechist at Half Graway,"[1] and eleven years later he took charge briefly of the Spring Hill (or Spring Hall) School at Garraway.[2] Unfortunately, as Bishop Ferguson reported in 1904, "Satan has been unusually active here, and two of the teachers have fallen into his snares." One of the two was Harris, and he was conditionally suspended. He must by now have been nearly 40 years old, but Ferguson included him in his observation that "The young men thus brought under discipline seem determined to give further trouble, but to carry on the work successfully we must take a decided stand in such matters."[3]

Harris was soon deemed trustworthy again and in 1907-08 was in charge of the boarding school at Half Garraway, where he was responsible for sixteen pupils.[4] The Rev. B. Kedare Speare, who was rector of the parish and was therefore Harris's supervisor,[5] was the same Grebo preacher whose murder on the veranda of his house at Harper

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1 Protestant Episcopal Church, The Annual Report of the Board of Missions, 1892, p. 159. Hereafter cited as Annual Report.

2 Annual Report, 1903, p. 186.

3 Annual Report, 1904, p. 235.

4 Annual Report, 1907-08, p. 68.

5 Ibid., p. 68.

in 1910 contributed to the rising of the Grebos in that year.[1] Speare had uphill work in keeping the standards of his fellow Grebo Christians at the required level, and on the occasion of the Bishop's visit to his parish in 1908 the latter had to excommunicate seven persons on account of their immoral lives. "With polygamy and other evils so rife in the country," wrote the Bishop, "the native Christians have a strong current against them and are apt to drift down the stream."[2] Harris, at that time, was never accused of advocating polygamy, but since it was a problem which obviously gave concern to the church leaders among the Grebos, he must have thought about it a great deal and wondered whether Christianity was right in demanding that Africans abandon this ancient institution.

The end of his period as a compliant church worker was in sight. Despite his lack of higher education, he was intelligent and bold, and during these years of preaching the Word of God in the villages around Half Garraway he spoke not only of spiritual things but also of the proud, independent past of the Grebos and their present state of bondage to the tax-collecting Americo-Liberians. When matters had reached the crisis early in 1910, Harris is said to have publicly

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1 F.O. 458/10, Baldwin to Grey, 13 April 1910, supra, p. 44.

2 Annual Report, 1907-08, p. 68.

desecrated the Liberian flag[1] and raised the Union Jack at Paduke, facing Harper, as a challenge to Liberian authority and a stimulation to the warlike spirits of the Grebos.[2] The collapse of the war found him in prison at Harper but he was released, when things had settled

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1 Oral evidence communicated by Rev. W.B. Williams (b. England 1867) who had supervised an American Methodist Mission station at Nana Kroo for many years and often gave Harris hospitality there. He also visited Harris while he was in prison (which,he says, was a very comfortable prison) and begged him to change his ways. Williams's evidence communicated through J.A. Murray of Tampa, Florida, in letter of 26 January 1966. Unfortunately, Williams is too senile to be the source of information he would have been ten years ago.

2 Some of the theories which have found their way into print are:

A. Roux, "Un Prophète: Harris," Le Monde Noir, Paris, 1955, pp. 133-40. This former Protestant missionary in Ivory Coast quite erroneously describes the flag-raising as a signal to summon the faithful to Church, to the annoyance of the Liberian Government.

B. Holas, Le Séparatisme Religieux en Afrique Noire, Paris, 1965, p. 261, describes the young and fervent revolutionary hoisting the flag provocatively over his house in Cape Palmas as a visible defiance, not to the Liberians, but "aux autorités françaises occupant alors la région." His source for this misleading statement is F.W. Pilkington, "Old Man 'Union Jack': William Wade Harris, Prophet of West Africa," West African Review, February 1952, p. 122. Pilkington's account is full of errors, often due to taking D.S. Ching, Ivory Tales, London, 1950, much too literally, when the latter, in fact, allowed himself a good deal of poetic licence in interpreting Harris's thoughts and motivations. However, Pilkington does make the interesting suggestion that the Union Jack represented "the New Westernism" towards which Harris wished to lead his African followers as a prophet.

M. Musson, Prophet Harris, the Amazing Story of Old Pa Union Jack, Wallington, Surrey, 1950, p. 63, describes the ancient retired man as believing that oppression would end in Liberia if the British would come, and then "to show his faith in British rule, and to prove his own courage against oppressors, old William hoisted his flag above his own house." (He had picked up the flag in Lagos, according to this account.)

down, without being brought to trial.[1] According to Harris's own testimony a few years later, this was his third act of rebellion against the state.[2]

This matter of the raising of the Union Jack seems to have been a mystery to many of the people who have written on Harris. It seems obvious that at a time when the Liberian public feared a British attack on their independence, and when Britain's influence was under sharp attack in Government circles in Liberia, nothing was better calculated to infuriate the authorities at Harper than the raising of the British flag. At the same time, because of the desire on the part of the Grebos for annexation by Britain, and the great sentimental pull it exercised on those who had sailed as Kru boys under it, it was well chosen as a symbolic expression of Grebo sentiments. Perhaps on his visit in 1909 Dr. Blyden repeated the phrase he had once used in London: "Liberia is a British Colony in everything but the flag,"[3] and Harris took it literally. However, the reasonable explanation is that it was an act of hostility to the Liberian Government, and this has been confirmed by later Grebo witnesses.[4]

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1 Rev. J.D. Kwee Baker.

2 J.E. Casely Hayford, William Waddy Harris, the West African Reformer: The Man and His Message, London, 1915, p. 9. He also quotes him as saying he began "prophesying and preaching rebellion."

3 E.W. Blyden, West Africa before Europe, London, 1905, p. 23.

4 Specifically, Rev. J.D. Kwee Baker and S.J.M. Johnson (writer of Traditional Folklore, op. cit.), who says in a letter from Monrovia 20 July 1965, "Harris, as one of those who favoured British rule, planted the British flag on Liberian soil."

While he was still in prison, Harris said later,[1] he was visited by the Archangel Gabriel whom he saw, not with his eyes, externally, but inside, spiritually. The Angel said, "You are not in prison. God is coming to annoint you. You will be a prophet." Later, when the Angel announced, "You are not in prison, you are in Heaven," the Spirit descended on Harris with a sound like a jet of water. "It was like ice on my head and all over my skin. He did this three times in succession." He believed it was the same Spirit that came down at Pentecost, and as men had then talked in tongues, so he talked to God in tongues. He believed his situation was that described in Revelations 20:4 ("Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom judgment was committed.") He described himself as being commissioned like the watchman in Ezekiel 33, and went out saying, "Prepare ye, prepare ye, Jesus Christ is at hand. Repent ye ... I say to all men, black or white, to repent and believe in Jesus Christ. I am the last prophet ..."

From his reading he knew the Scriptures well. As the Methodist missionary, Pierre Benoit, said when he met him sixteen years later:

> He lives in a supernatural world in which the people, the ideas, the affirmations, the cosmogony and the eschatology of the Bible are more real than those which he sees and hears materially. He can adapt wonderfully some situation or some attitude of his adversary to a text and find an analogy in the Scriptures.
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> The great vision which he had in prison made him the prophet Harris. He felt himself enter directly into this world which he knew by his reading and of which he made henceforth a part.

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[1] Benoit's Report. This passage is chiefly quoted directly from Harris.

He believed God called him to the highest missions a man might be given, yet his humility was such that he never ceased to marvel that it was given to "me, a kruboy." Benoit wrote:

> But he never doubts it, above all he never derogates it. Neither money, nor threats, nor weariness deprive him of the pride he has in carrying through the world the message of the severe and just God whom he announces. 'Burn your fetishes and idols, or fire from Heaven will be upon you.'

When Harris came out of prison he followed the commands of Gabriel and stripped off all European cloth, and taking (it is said) a sheet and a pillowcase,[1] he made a hole for his head in the middle of the one, forming a tunic, and tied the other into a turban. His appearance was quite unlike any native costume known in the coastal regions of West Africa,[2] and descriptions of him sought in various directions for reasonable comparisons. A Catholic priest wrote: "He was advanced in years and of imposing appearance. He had a white beard [and] dressed in a white garment like a cassock or a Hausa cloak."[3] Casely Hayford wrote of his "loose calico gown with a black tape thrown over and a rough woven cloth of the same material around his neck,"[4] while at the same time another observer who recorded his impressions on the spot told of Harris strolling with a portmanteau slung at his side

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1 Rev. W.B. Williams.

2 Though today in the Ivory Coast and Ghana a similar costume is worn by every "prophet" who preaches and heals in the Harris tradition or an imitation of it.

3 From the journal kept by the missionary Father Stauffer at Axim, seen at the Mission House there. Hereafter cited as "Father Stauffer's Journal."

4 Casely Hayford, op. cit., p. 15.

like John Bunyan,

> with a white sheep's skin rolled in his hand and his cross and Bible in the other. He is robed in white in the form of a Roman Catholic Father with two strips of dark cloths slung across his shoulders in the shape of a stole ... his cross is made of bamboo about six feet in length and covered alternately in with black and white cloths.[1]

Besides this cross, which, it is said, he never hesitated to smash when it was in danger of being revered as the secret of his power by the ignorant, and so often replaced by a new one, he carried a small Bible, a bowl for water, and a calabash, dried and covered with a beaded net so that it clashed musically when shaken sharply.

Outfitted in this way, Harris announced to all that he had been called to be a prophet, and he left his home to begin wandering and preaching. He asked for nothing from those who listened to him save food and shelter for the moment. When his word was not heeded he did not hesitate to threaten to call down fire from Heaven. Those who had known him before believed he had gone mad in prison, and his faithful wife died of grief at seeing him thus.[2] In many places, however, where the people had been quite untouched by the missionaries, he inspired awe and fear and baptized many, telling them to go to church and learn what they must do.

He found his way to Monrovia where the French Vice-Consul

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1 The Gold Coast Leader, 4 July 1914.

2 Benoit's Report.

there saw him "carrying a stick surmounted with a cross, gesturing and crying or actually bawling out, without any great success, at the crossroads; the scoffers were more numerous than the converts ... his stay in the Negro capital was not of long duration."[1]

A quite different impression was given by a Catholic missionary at Grand Bassa who talked to Harris a few years later and described him as being

> a magnificent type of Negro, the most handsome I have ever had the occasion to contemplate ... his features were really very expressive, his looks proud ... He spoke English perfectly, which is remarkable for a Kruman for they most often speak in an English which is only intelligible to those initiated in it.[2]

At that time Harris was intimating that he had had no education and that his mastery of English and of the Bible had come by the gift of tongues and of divine inspiration. According to the priest,

> his conversation revealed no defect of intelligence, his manners and conduct offered no symptom of nervous excitement or of hysteria, he simply seemed possessed by a holy horror of fetishism and in no way biased or preoccupied with political sympathies. Whether it be an auto-suggestion or by patriotism or by the most profoundly religious feelings, he seemed to be entirely convinced that his tribe, the Kru tribe, dispersed as she is along the whole coast of West Africa, was destined, like the Jews, to play an active role in a 'new law of Christ' and that he himself, a prophet, was one of the pillars of the future edifice of universal Christianity.[3]

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[1] Dakar, French Vice-Consul Baret, Monrovia, to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paris, 19 February 1915.

[2] Father Harrington, "Une Interview avec le Prophète Noir," L'Écho des Missions Africaines de Lyon, 5, September-October 1917, p. 159. Hereafter cited as L'Écho.

[3] Ibid., 6, November-December 1917, p. 195.

In 1913 Harris felt called to travel eastward down the Coast and to take two women with him as his assistants. They were dressed in white as he was and carried calabashes with which to accompany their chants and songs, most of which were sung in the Grebo tongue.

On this journey Harris really earned the title of "Prophet" to which he laid claim. The whole population of the regions through which he passed accepted him as the authentic voice of God and His messenger to revitalize their religion and society which, subjected as they were to new and increasing pressures, were failing them in a time of crisis. Harris, whose life had been spent straddling two cultures, saw to the heart of their predicament and by communicating his own blazing faith to them, brought a new factor to bear on its solution.

CHAPTER II

THE COLONIAL EXPERIENCE OF THE IVORY COAST AND THE FIRST PASSAGE OF HARRIS

When he crossed the Cavalla River the Prophet Harris entered a country where the pace of development was very much faster than that in Liberia,[1] and the revolutionary development was taking place in a much shorter time. Real French authority was hardly more than several decades old, and in 1913 was still struggling to root itself securely. In the regions where its control was secure, it applied pressures in the economic and political fields which forced an acceleration of the rate of change, though the French had hardly begun to familiarize the native population with the characteristics of European culture by direct education. As for religion, the dissemination of Christianity had barely commenced; only a handful of the Ivoirians had been won over by the French missionaries to the Roman Catholic Church.

The absence of satisfactory religious developments to accompany the revolutionary changes in the rest of life gave Harris a unique opportunity to preach to a people who felt the impotence of their gods without having anything to put in their place. They responded enthusiastically to his revelation. The following sketch of the history and development of the French colony of the Ivory Coast indicates the nature of the

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[1] Dr. Blyden had actually spoken with approval (1901) of the development taking place in the territory France took over from Liberia in 1892. Blyden, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

pressures on the native peoples, while the account of the reception they accorded Harris's first passage along their coast illustrates the extent of their religious hunger.

The French had been interested in parts of the Guinea Coast long before they made claims on it, and as early as 1838 they had proposed to set up factories (trading posts) for commercial interests at Garraway and Assinie, and had actually built forts at Assinie and Grand Bassam in 1843, at the same time making treaties with the chiefs at Sassandra, Fresco, and Grand Lahou.[1] They had gained little from this investment and had tried unsuccessfully to barter their sites to the British. Although at the time of the Franco-Prussian War the French troops had been withdrawn,[2] the French interest had been preserved by the appointment of a "Resident de France" in the person of a merchant from La Rochelle.

In 1886 these interests had been placed under the control of the Lieutenant-Governor of Senegal, in 1889 they came under the Lieutenant-Governor of the Rivers of the South, and in 1891 under Guinea. During those years the interior had been explored by Treich-Laplène and Binger. In 1893, when Binger was appointed first governor of the Ivory Coast, futile sorties against the slave-raiding ravages of

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1 E. Avice, Côte d'Ivoire, Paris, 1951, p. 38.

2 V. Thompson, "The Ivory Coast," in G.M. Carter, ed., African One-Party States, Ithaca, N.Y., 1962, p. 238.

Samory, the Muslim chieftain who, along the whole stretch of the edge of the savannah belt was defying the encroachment of European penetration, revealed grave weaknesses in French organization.[1] If Samory were to be overcome, there would have to be clearer definitions of civil and military authority and about the use the territorial governors could make of the French troops allotted to them.

The Decree of 16 June 1895 established a federal authority in French West Africa, by which all military powers of the Governors, and some of their administrative powers, were passed over to Governor General Chaudié, who was to be in full control of Senegal.[2] The defeat of Samory in 1898 meant that disrupted communications could be restored and boundaries could be drawn in the north, as they had been on the east with the Gold Coast and on the west (provisionally) with Liberia.

The major problems to French authority arose in the heartland of the colony, the great forest belt, which pulsated with perpetual agitations. Treaties of protection were negotiated with the chiefs of all this area, by which French traders were granted privileges in return for which France promised to respect traditional institutions and grant subsidies. When, soon after, a head-tax was imposed, it was regarded as a violation of these terms as well as an insult to the dignity of the

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1 C.W. Newberry, "The Government-General of French West Africa," Journal of African History, I, 1960, p. 114.

2 Ibid., p. 115.

people. Rebellion swept the interior, the Baoulés being the most active.[1] By 1908, when Gabriel Angoulvant was appointed Lieutenant-Governor, only the coastal strip remained in French hands.

During the regime of Governor Binger a beginning had been made at providing education for the Ivoirians. At that time anti-clericalism had not yet triumphed in French politics and he had looked to the Church for assistance. At his invitation the Fathers of the Société des Missions Africaines de Lyon had come to co-operate with the Administration in carrying out France's "civilizing mission." Binger could not subsidize their religious propagandizing directly, but in a letter of 11 January 1895 he had undertaken to steer in their direction the sums earmarked in the local budget for education.[2] On their arrival at Bassam, the Fathers had been disappointed to find the population of the town scarcely representative of the native peoples (most of the inhabitants were Africans from other French or British colonies) and soon established inland stations among the real Ivoirians. However, the sparse and scattered nature of the population had made it difficult for them to fix on really worthwhile sites for development.

They assumed responsibility for the operation of the school already opened at Bassam, only adding religion to its curriculum. In 1896 they had brought out a prefabricated church which they erected at

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[1] Thompson, op. cit., p. 238.

[2] J. Gorju, La Côte d'Ivoire Chrétienne, 2d ed., Lyon, 1915, p. 11.

Grand Bassam, and in it they had baptized their first converts.

Other than these Fathers and their few converts, the only Christians prior to the coming of Harris were found among the foreign Africans from British colonies. Among these were groups of Methodists, and these held their own services in such towns as Assinie, Bassam, and Lahou without making any efforts to proselytize among the Ivoirians. These Protestants were never a factor requiring consideration by the Administration, since there was no European missionary in the colony and the community did nothing to bring itself to public notice. The presence of the Fathers, on the other hand, could never be ignored, if only to be deplored by the Administration as constituting an indigestible lump in the rational society they were, as time went on, aiming to create in the colony. Lieutenant-Governor Mouttet, who had taken office in 1896, while nominally a Protestant, was quite without religious convictions of any kind. He had decided that the Catholic Mission alone should be entrusted with "teaching the new generations of the Colony the French language and inculcating in them the love of France. He had understood that religion is the most powerful agent of civilization," according to the flattered missionaries.[1]

In November 1898 the Fathers had been reinforced by a group of Sisters of the Religieuses de Notre-Dame des Apôtres, by which time the Mission had seven stations and had contact with five tribes, the

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[1] Gorju, op. cit., p. 25.

Attiês, Adjoukrous, Abourês, Alladians, and Agnis. During the following year, when bubonic plague had spread through the colony, carrying off a third of the white population of Bassam, including the Prefect Apostolic, Catholic Mission activity had suffered a grave set-back.[1]

A brief period of expansion had opened in 1900 when a convention was signed between the Mission and the Government whereby the former would set up and staff primary schools, for each of which the Government would allocate 285 francs per month. Each school was to have a European teacher and an African monitor, and would faithfully follow the Government's directives on education.[2] This agreement had reflected a certain prestige on the Mission, as well as being of great financial benefit, and it had consequently been a blow to have the Administration, on the victory of anti-clerical forces in metropolitan France, renounce the convention (1 January 1904). For two more years the Mission schools struggled on, though with difficulty, feeling that to close them without a definite request from the Government would have been to show ill-will.[3] However, by the middle of 1906 the Administration felt able to provide adequate lay instruction, and the Mission was ordered to close most of its schools. The number of Government schools had grown steadily; in 1908 there had been 22, by 1912, 66, and teachers were being trained at two separate

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1 Gorju, op. cit., p. 75.

2 Ibid., p. 80.

3 Dakar, Prefect Apostolic, Moousso, to Administration, 26 July 1906.

institutions.[1]

The unfriendliness of the Government had not killed the Catholic Mission but at the time William Wade Harris invaded their territory they had, at the end of nearly twenty years of evangelizing effort, only 1,100 baptized converts, with another 400 under instruction.[2] For their part, the Fathers claimed that they were very few in numbers (those who had not died on duty) and very poor,[3] and their record seemed fair enough in the face of their problems.

When on 1 May 1908 Angoulvant took charge of the Ivory Coast he found that only the cercles of the east and north, Bassam, Assinie, Indenie, Boudoukou, Kong, and Korhogo were really under control.[4] Although the coastal strip was orderly, for the most part, French control was restricted there. In the important Cercle des Lagunes the interior, where the Abbeys and Attiés lived, was hostile and unknown. In these uncontrolled regions there was no security and no commerce.[5]

Angoulvant diagnosed the lack of French control over this region as due to the emphasis put on a "peaceful conquest." The benefits French rule would confer on the savages of the forest had seemed, in France, so self-evident that they were expected to voluntarily give up

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1 F.O. 458/14, Wallis (Dakar) to Grey, 4 April 1912.

2 J. Bianquis, Le Prophète Harris, Paris, 1924, p. 3.

3 Gorju, op. cit., p. 235.

4 G. Angoulvant, La Pacification de la Côte d'Ivoire, 1908-1915, Paris, 1916, p. 13.

5 Ibid., p. 14.

their freedom of action. The new country had been traversed by explorers who negotiated or "bought" their way and by merchants, and this was thought to have made the land French. But when administrators were installed and began to impose rules, to limit individual freedom "so that all might be free," and then to impose a tax, they encountered, naturally, resistance.[1] The native, as Angoulvant had come to know him, would become friendly only after he had been conquered, and even then he would soon lose respect for his conqueror unless continually reminded of the latter's superior strength by being forced to pay taxes and provide men for the prestation (forced labour).[2] At each change of chief or administrator, the crisis occurred again and had to be settled anew.

The Ivory Coast Administration had run into trouble when the individualistic peoples of the forest declined to be treated like a conquered people (i.e., made to pay taxes) when they were not, and so had taken up arms. The Government had met the crisis weakly, at first refusing an offer of troops from Dakar, then accepting a platoon and later, reluctantly, a company, but all with regret, as if it were a civil war they were initiating. In Angoulvant's opinion, it had not been a civil war but a belated conquest which alone would win France respect among the people she was determined to rule and civilize.

The conquest had been easy in one way, since the Ivoirians

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1 Angoulvant, op. cit., p. 22.

2 Ibid., pp. 33-35.

were divided in many groups which could make no common cause with one another, but difficult in that no one blow could vanquish all resistance, and the forest had many hiding places for those who would not give up. Again, the follow-up to conquest had been feeble. The punishments had been insufficient, with little or no internment of the rebellious chiefs and the feticheurs who had instigated the revolts, and the fines which were imposed were not heavy enough. The taxes imposed were too feeble, no effort was made to control powder or guns, nor to gather in the arms in circulation. The result was that after a period of quiet the revolts broke out again. This was why the heartland of the colony was uncontrolled by France in 1908; although the Great Powers recognized French claims there, the natives did not.

Angoulvant wrote to the Governor General on 15 June discussing the situation and suggesting that while in such cercles as Bassam and Assinie a merely administrative activity could be carried on, others had to be treated to a more intense penetration and have the head-tax introduced. The Cercles des Lagunes, Lahou, N'Zi-Comoé, and Cavally were among these. He noted that although the Cercle des Lagunes had enjoyed a very long contact with Europeans, its native population "maintains in regard to us an unsympathetic reserve, a defiance and restless irritability."[1] In the Lahou area, only at Grand Lahou and the coastal villages was the situation satisfactory.

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[1] Angoulvant, op. cit., p. 72.

Angoulvant's plan was approved and the "methode rigoreuse" began, with military expeditions scouring the country, and the natives, unable to unite, were conquered piecemeal. Some chiefs were deported, some were interned, while the fines levied between 1910 and 1912 amounted to more than 700,000 francs.[1] By 1911 most tribes had submitted, and except in the east, along the Liberian Frontier, the measures Angoulvant had outlined were being applied to make it clear that the French were masters. Standard procedures included the forceful disarming of bellicose tribes (of 115,000 guns) and a prohibition of the importation of guns and ammunition. This supposedly encouraged agriculture, as well as obviously making rebellion more difficult, and dealt a blow to the slave trade which had flourished as a means of buying arms.[2]

In the forest areas most people lived in very small hamlets or camps (campements) approached by secret paths through the forest. These were now destroyed and the inhabitants were "grouped" in spacious villages sited in healthy open spaces. In many cases these were placed along the railway or the lines where highways were to be built. The new huts, of the local type, were placed along wide avenues. In the Yamoussoukrou district some 400 hamlets had been replaced by 30 fine villages. Chiefs responsible to the Government were put over each village.[3]

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1 R.L. Buell, The Native Problem in Africa, New York, 1928, I, p. 918.

2 G. Joseph, La Côte d'Ivoire, Paris, 1917, p. 151.

3 Ibid., p. 153.

Another means of impressing the meaning of French sovereignty was to hand from 1912, when a regular "recruitment" began for "Tirailleurs" or Native Infantry. Although men might volunteer for service, the quota was, for the most part, filled by four-year conscripts selected by the chiefs.

The recruitment of West Africans had begun long before the Ivory Coast became French; as early as the Napoleonic period, slaves were purchased for the use of the French Army. Presumably, they were used as porters and servants, rather than as soldiers, but in 1828 some 198 Wolofs were purchased in Senegal as soldiers for service in Madagascar, where they fought very well.[1] Although voluntary recruiting was attempted in the following years, it had little success. During the Crimean War, when white soldiers could not be spared for Africa, Faidherbe formed the first corps of Senegalese Tirailleurs (decree of 21 July 1857) with a special uniform and a reasonable rate of pay.[2] By 1860 there were six companies of these troops, and during French expansion after 1880 they were invaluable. As the French expanded into the Western Sudan, they left the chiefs with some prestige and a certain autonomy in return for the recruiting of man-power for the Army.

The decree of 7 February 1912 which extended this system to all West Africa was not prompted by any special circumstances in the

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1 S.C. Davis, Reservoirs of Men: A History of the Black Troops of French West Africa, Geneva, 1934, p. 26.

2 Ibid., pp. 46-7.

Ivory Coast; it was rather an aspect of Imperial policy, faced by the rapid increase taking place in German man-power and the declining birth-rate in France. In the Chamber of Deputies some voices were raised against the bill, on the grounds that it would drive the population of the already under-populated colonies into neighbouring lands. Despite this well-founded objection, the bill passed.[1]

The head-tax (impôt de capitation) was levied once a year[2] and was collected as soon as possible at the beginning of the year. Sometimes it was demanded more often, but this was an abuse checked from headquarters as soon as discovered.[3] The rate of taxation in any area was evaluated according to its production and wealth. For example, regions producing palm oil and rubber would pay more than where only manioc (cassava) was grown.[4] Generally, it was the coastal areas which were taxed at the highest rate, and the tax fixed for 1915 varied from 5 francs per person in the Cercles des Lagunes, Assinie, Bassam, and part of Lahou to 2.50 in certain parts of Lahou, 4.50 in Bas-Cavally, 4 in Baoulé-Nord, and 3, 3.50, and 4 francs in various other cercles or tribal areas.[5] The guns left in the hands of chiefs and other

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1 Davis, op. cit., p. 137.

2 Abid. I-12-150, Arrête of 27 June 1914 cites authorization of arrête of 14 March 1901, modified by arrête of Governor General, 30 December 1908.

3 Abid. I-24-280, Circular of 24 May 1917.

4 Abid. I-24-280, Circular re Head-Tax, 3 July 1917.

5 Abid. I-12-152, Arrête fixing head-tax for 1915 issued at Bingerville, 12 November 1914.

eminent men also paid a tax from July 1914.[1]

Although Governor Angoulvant's own account gives the impression that his policy was a most humane and creditable solution to the situation of 1908, outside observers thought otherwise. The British consul in Liberia put part of the blame for the sparseness of the Ivoirian population on Angoulvant's methods. He wrote:

> As opposition to the French advance was overcome, the natives fled, and numbers of them have never returned. The ruthless methods adopted by the French against the natives, when men, women and children have been killed, is an ugly blot in the history of their occupation of Africa.[2]

The French view, expressed by an Ivoirian scholar, was that France,

> conscious of her role as liberator and educator, ... wished to maintain herself in the country to dispense there these benefits, and she did not hesitate, in the name of that civilization, to spill the blood of her children to attain this end.[3]

M. Amon-d'Aby must have been writing with tongue in cheek when he penned these lines.

Economically, the Ivory Coast was fortunate in having splendid forests, particularly rich in mahogany. In the early days trees would be chopped down and left for a time; those which withstood insects and decay would be considered worth shipping. The exportation

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1 Abid. I-12-151, Arrête re taxing of firearms, 24 July 1914.

2 F.O. 458/14, Wallis (Dakar) to Grey, 4 April 1912.

3 F.J. Amon-d'Aby, La Côte d'Ivoire dans la Cité Africaine, Paris, 1951, p. 26.

of timber had increased thus:[1]

in 1905 - 13,741 cubic metres
1906 - 15,016
1907 - 28,651
1908 - 25,781
1909 - 24,607
1910 - 21,205
1911 - 36,634
1912 - 46,907
1913 - 65,618

Cocoa was grown in the colony from about 1895 and Angoulvant ordered its cultivation to be encouraged. He forced the inhabitants at Bingerville, Aboisso, Bassam, Abengourou, and Grand Lahou to make community plantations. Force was needed because farmers were indifferent to a crop which required at least five years between planting and the first harvest. There was actually a belief that the person who planted cocoa would die before its first harvest, so there was attempted sabotage of some of the cocoa-farms so reluctantly made.[2] The Lieutenant-Governor and his subordinates made frequent inspections of the original plantations and others to instruct and encourage the farmers.

Despite the initial lack of interest, the possibilities of cocoa were soon perceived and average annual shipments grew from 4 tonnes between 1904 and 1908 to 25 tonnes by 1913, and, indicative of the amount of planting by that time, to 224 tonnes in 1914-1918 and 1,178 tonnes by 1919-1921.[3]

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[1] "L'Afrique Occidentale Française: Les Exportations de la Côte d'Ivoire," L'Afrique Française, XXXIV, 3, March 1924, p. 189.

[2] Amon-d'Aby, op. cit., p. 75.

[3] L'Afrique Française, op. cit., p. 188.

Coffee was kept as a monopoly of white planters and its cultivation affected the Ivoirians only marginally compared with palm kernels, palm oil, copra, and rubber which, encouraged as peasant cash crops, enormously increased spending power.

Except for the handful of Catholic converts and a Muslim population in the north, the indigenous peoples of the colony were animists, "fetish worshippers," devotees of the traditional religion of the coast and forest with which Harris was well acquainted. There was nothing essentially foreign for him in the traditional society he encountered, and having been to Lagos and Gabon he knew better than to expect to find Kru customs universal. He would find the Didas, linguistically of the Kru family[1] and, like them, patrilineal, most familiar. The other peoples he influenced in the Ivory Coast and the Gold Coast have cultural and linguistic affinities with the Akans further east. Linguistically, the Alladians, Avikams (Brignans), M'Batos, Ebriés, Abourés, Attiés, Abidjis, and Abbeys belong to the lagoon cluster of the Kwa group of languages,[2] while Aizi may be a Kru dialect and Adjoukrou is classed as a language of the West Atlantic group.[3] The Agni, Nzima (Apollonian), Sanwi, Sefwi, Bettié, and Ahanta languages

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[1] D. Westermann and M.A. Bryan, The Languages of West Africa, London, 1952, p. 48.

[2] Ibid., p. 77.

[3] Ibid., p. 77. Yet some authorities (e.g., Parrinder, West African Religion, op. cit., p. 8) have identified the Adjoukrous as an "Akan clan."

are dialects of the Anyi-Baoulé cluster[1] of the Kwa group, which belongs to the Akan family.

Culturally, all these groups have strong similarities and are matrilineal; their social institutions in some cases resemble those of the Krus, in others the Akans. Each of the groups mentioned was to be found in a particular area except the Apollonians, who were to be found all over the country working as commercial agents with the European firms.[2]

Clearly, there existed no barrier to Harris's intuitive understanding of these people and he was not likely to blunder psychologically when he began preaching to them.

The Cercle de Lahou: Fresco and Ebonou

The most westerly administrative area of the Ivory Coast in which Harris was to make a lasting impression was the Cercle de Lahou. With its capital at Grand Lahou, which had the chief military establishment along the sea and was also a great trading centre, the Cercle was made up of the subdivisions of Lahou and Fresco on the Coast, and Divo and Lakota-Zikiso inland.

The natives of the coastal area were the tall, copper-coloured Avikams or Brignans, while inland were the shorter, darker Didas. The economy was, for the most part, on a subsistence level. The men fished

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1 Westermann and Bryan, op. cit., p. 77.

2 L. Tauxier, Religion, Moeurs et Coutumes des Agnis de la Côte-d'Ivoire, Paris, 1932, p. 175.

to satisfy their own needs and offered hardly any surplus for the Lahou market, while they grew yam and manioc and gathered coconuts only for their own consumption. Only the oil-palms were harvested with an eye to trade. The Government aimed at enlarging the interest in commerce and so coco-palm seedlings were being distributed free along the coast and villages were being reconstructed more hygienically, e.g., with wide cleared spaces around them. The people were encouraged to bring in more fish, were warned against the intemperate use of alcohol,[1] and were made to build roads and bridges where these were required.[2]

In the northern area, opposition to the French was still active in 1913 and late in the year the Administrateur rejoiced in the capture of Dago, an implacably hostile chief known also as a dangerous feticheur.[3]

The religious practices of the people, which concentrated to a great degree on witchcraft and its detection, were a worry to the Administration, and during 1913 several striking cases of its harmful effects were brought to light in Lozoua.

The Cercle de Lahou was a frontier district. Along the coast the inhabitants were peaceful and foreign traders were bringing a breath of the international world of commerce which, along with the Adminis-

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1 Abid. X-39-5, Report of Chef de Poste, Lahou, August 1913.

2 Abid. X-39-5, Report of Administrateur, Lahou, 4th quarter 1913.

3 Abid. X-39-5, Report of Administrateur, Lahou, 4th quarter 1913.

tration's efforts, was opening the eyes of the people to the possibilities of money, wealth, and possessions. Inland, the tribes of the forest still defended their individual rights as men independent of government and indifferent to commerce.

Besides the native populations, there were many Apollonians from the eastern part of the colony who had come to work with the trading firms as lumbermen in the forest industries. They were vigorous, prolific, and not too scrupulous in business, and settled down permanently as planters and traders.[1]

When Harris reached Fresco in 1913 he was observed by a certain Mr. Morgan, an Englishman, who was an agent for Woodin & Co.,[2] and who reported later:

> Folks ... were sunk in debased superstition and fetich-worship, and had been so for years. In three days this prophet-fellow--I heard him preach myself--changed all that. Their fetiches were burnt and what was an ordinary African coast village, steeped in superstition, became nominally a Christian town.[3]

Fresco tradition said that Harris walked through the streets holding a great brass tray to collect the fetishes people brought to him.

News of his coming preceded him and he was variously described as a "messenger of God"[4] and, more mysteriously, as "a great fetish,"[5]

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1 R. Grivot, "Le Cercle de Lahou (Côte d'Ivoire)", Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Afrique Noire, IV, 1-4, January-October 1942, p. 55.

2 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Platt to Thompson, 21 November 1924.

3 W.J. Platt, An African Prophet, London, 1934, p. 34.

4 Jacques Boga Sako, a typewritten memoir submitted Ebonou, 29 August 1963.

5 Oral evidence of Abraham Nandjui, Sanfon-Tê, August 1963. Perhaps he was believed to be a priest bringing a very powerful fetish with him.

so when he arrived at the Avikam town of Ebonou (or Petit Lahou) he was not altogether unexpected.[1]

In Ebonou there were a number of branches of such British firms as Richard & William King and Woodin & Co. (both these had local headquarters at Grand Lahou) and it was some of the clerks ("clarks"[2]) of these firms who had a decisive influence on the movement which developed out of Harris's visit, and without whom it is doubtful that his efforts could have had any lasting effect. In this area the fact that Harris spoke English was more useful for his preaching than if he had spoken French, because the West Coast "pidgin" was quite commonly spoken as a second language. One of the clerks, a native Avikam named Jacques Boga Sako, who interpreted for the Prophet and became a mainstay of the church as it developed there,[3] has left a short written account of Harris's visit which conveys a breath of the atmosphere which swept Ebonou.[4]

Harris caused an immediate sensation; he appeared to the inhabitants to be a Spirit, he was so unlike any humans they knew. His white gown and turban, his black sashes, his white beard and flashing

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1 Jacques Boga Sako.

2 "Clarks" is a term used with contempt by Paul Marty, Études sur l'Islam en Côte d'Ivoire, Paris, 1922, p. 16. He may not have meant the Lahou group but a less respectable assortment further east.

3 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Platt to Thompson, 21 November 1924.

4 Sako had spent some years at Winneba, near Accra, and returned home to work for "la Cie King." He probably spoke a fluent pidgin, though he writes, "Malheureusement, je ne lisais et ne m'exprimais en anglais que passablement."

eyes, filled all who saw him with awe,[1] and it could be believed that a new god had arrived, more powerful than any preceding ones.

Harris made his way to the house of the Chief, Ekpo-Avi-Addi,[2] to make himself known, and then began to preach the Kingdom of Heaven and the existence and power of God and Christ.[3] He demanded the assistance of the Christian traders and clerks when he discovered that they met regularly for private worship. Of these, A.E.M. Brown,[4] a clerk at Woodin's (a native of Asafa, Saltpond, Gold Coast) became the chief Harris deputy, assisted by J.W. Reffell,[5] a Sierra Leonean working at King's. These Christians had made no effort to convert the inhabitants, who relied on the god "'Zri-Gnaba" of Batchoué[6] (Tabou) and carried their petitions to his shrine there. Besides this, they had many minor

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1 Jacques Boga Sako.

2 Sako explains that this Chief, being actually a leper, was deputized for by Amessan N'Drin, who had the advantage of being able to speak English.

3 Sako writes: "il commença par les annoncer la bonne nouvelle du Royaume des cieux, l'existence et la puissance du Dieu Le Createur de toutes les Choses et son Fils le Seigneur Jesus Christ."

4 Oral sources in the Lahou area indicate that Brown assumed the leadership when Harris went eastward. One old informant at Grand Lahou stated that Harris said to Brown, "You must go baptize the rest of the people and I give you the power." Brown died at Grand Lahou in 1943. His son, J.K. Brown, was at Ebonou in 1963.

5 A Samuel Reffell is mentioned by the authorities as a disciple in September 1914.

6 He was the Earth-God. There was a special feast for him once a year when people from all around would gather at the town and feast on a couple of cows. There was no effigy of him to be adored, but the lesser spirits were present in concrete symbols and were kept in good humour by being given water to drink, eggs, and other food to eat, and by being bathed at intervals.

fetishes brought from the Aizis and the Adjoukrous; the spirits they honoured included Assouê-Tano, Aschi-Loboê, Aschia, Schêkeu, Blikpeu, and the fearsome Mando. There was no missionary and no school, so the arrival of the foreign preacher exuding power and confidence and announcing a revolutionary new order was a sensation. People flocked to hear him and when he said they must destroy their fetishes and confess their sins they obeyed him, even those most intimate with the spirits.[1] No one before had made such a demand. They gave their fetishes to him and he burned them, then arranged the people in rows and baptized them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Some people had tried to insure against a failure of the Prophet's power by hiding their idols in the bush but a strange fire consumed them there and this increased the awe inspired by Harris.[2] While he was baptizing, certain women who had been fetish dancers began to shake, but became quiet when he touched them, making the sign of the cross in baptism. Before he baptized with the water, which he held in a little white dish, he prayed over it, setting it down near the cross.[3]

According to Sako, Harris gave as his first text at Ebonou Ezekiel 37:1-14, exhorting his audience in different ways to love their

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1 Probably not only priests, but healers and practitioners of black magic.

2 This story was told several times in the Lahou area. Whatever the basis for it, it is certainly believed that Harris called down fire on the hidden group of magical objects. Harris believed it too, as he told Pierre Benoit.

3 Some sources say that Harris read from the English Prayer Book during his baptisms. Amon-d'Aby, op. cit., p. 151.

neighbours as themselves and prophesying that a war would come, followed by the establishment of friendship between Black and White.

When Harris had been a fortnight at Ebonou he received such a pressing call from the Dida town of Lozoua, up the lagoon, that he went there, leaving behind his two female companions. He left the work at Ebonou in the hands of Sako, Brown, and Reffell, with Acting-Chief Amessan N'Drin as nominal director of the movement. These men carried on the work of receiving and burning the fetishes and administering the baptism. Churches were built which people attended, in some cases from six in the morning to six at night without taking time out for meals. Preachers were appointed by Sako and these instructed the congregations in their duties towards God. The clerks, being Methodists, taught them hymns which were translated into Avikam, along with the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and so forth. The people worked and ate together in harmony and formed choirs to sing at their services.

The Cercle de Lahou: Lozoua

Lozoua, like Ebonou, is built on an arm of the Tadio Lagoon, but considerably further from the sea coast. Populated by Didas, it is the portal to their country and such tribes or sub-tribes as the Yoberi, N'Gbabam, Kazerberi, Gondoukou, and Brondoukou.[1] In 1913 it was a considerable trading centre and the foreign firms maintained factories

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[1] Abid. X-39-4, Letter of Administrateur, Lahou, 31 March 1914, and enclosed report of Administrateur-Adjoint Bru, 27 March 1914.

which bought palm oil and kernels and sold imported products to the natives. The area around Lozoua was said to have a quarter of the population and at least half the wealth of the Cercle de Lahou, and its future was extremely promising. The French were still striving to counteract the English influence in the area which was, said the Administrateur, the "last commercial fief" of that nation's trading houses. The firms had for many years been making long-term advances which were covered by future deliveries of produce and this was a hindrance to progress. The leading personages were always receiving new advances before the old were paid off, so that they never had a chance to see money; instead, they consumed their credits in purchases of alcohol and other trade goods of questionable value.

In their greed, the heads of families, "les chefs de famille," bullied the young men and prevented them from working and earning on the plantations. This plutocracy of elders was accused of driving the adolescent youths to other centres to look for employment which would be paid, however meagrely. A further reason for the exodus of young men stemmed from the greed of their rich elders for the women, so that none were left as wives for the youths. Along with this went an anti-French feeling so strong that the young men who found work in French businesses were teased and attacked and developed a strong sense of shame at being connected with the French. Similarly, the employees of French firms at Lozoua were coldly treated and sometimes waited weeks for someone to sell them provisions.

Administrateur-Adjoint Bru investigated Lozoua in 1914 and noted these disagreeable tendencies, as well as the fact that the inhabitants profited by acting as middlemen and prevented the direct contact of producers from the interior with the firms. He also said that slaves were still obtained from Dida country and sold to all the lagoon peoples, and that old Affoh, the Chief, was a wicked and greedy man.[1]

In 1913, shortly before Harris appeared, Chief Affoh had been fined a thousand francs by the Tribunal of the Cercle as a punishment for the prominent part he took in judging and punishing people accused of being witches and having caused the death of one of his daughters. As her corpse was being carried around the town so that it might indicate those guilty of her death, it stopped first before two young men and then before an old woman, a cousin of the chief. It was decided that she should undergo a more serious ordeal than the more common red-wood test. She, however, ran away from the jeers of her relatives and hid several days in the bush. When she came back she said she had drunk the red-wood concoction but being innocent, had survived.[2] The two young men were

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[1] Abid. X-39-4, Letter of Administrateur, Lahou, 31 March 1914, and enclosed report of Administrateur-Adjoint Bru, 27 March 1914.

[2] The ability to drink a prepared poisonous liquid and survive is a common test of innocence, not only for witchcraft, but of any suspected crime. In Liberia, according to E. Warner, Trial by Sasswood, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1965, p. 42, it is the red water brewed from the bark of the sasswood tree which is used.

taken prisoner and questioned until one implicated his father, a brother-in-law of the Chief. Public opinion settled on this man as the culprit and he was avoided as being possessed by a very evil spirit. He was put in prison but when the French investigated they released him, accused the Chief of having misunderstood his duties as family-head and chief of the town, and found him to blame for all the witchcraft excitement.

The first the town heard of Harris is said to have been in a letter from A.E.M. Brown to his friend Ajusu Nobiê, in which he told of the burning of fetishes at Ebonou. When the townspeople heard of it they were anxious to have Harris come and rid them of the fetish burden also, so Chief Affoh sent men in a canoe to bring Harris. The Prophet refused to come, and refused a second time, but when friends at Lozoua wrote to Brown asking him to intervene, Harris was persuaded to go for a short visit. Because there were still so many men, women, and children in and around Ebonou waiting for baptism, he delegated his baptismal powers, as noted above.

On Harris's arrival at Lozoua he was led to the Chief and then all the inhabitants of the town were summoned to hear him.[1] When all were settled and he was asked to explain his business, Harris announced, "God has sent me to burn the fetishes." He explained that his route led along the Coast and that he had come inland only because Brown had asked

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[1] All this account is based on oral testimony of a large group at Lozoua who gathered to explain it in August 1963.

him to. Now that he had come he was ready to burn their fetishes. The atmosphere was tense as Chief and people considered their position. The Chief sensed that the people were willing to burn the fetishes if he would make the decision, so he made them share the responsibility by saying he was happy to burn the fetishes if they agreed. No dissenting opinion was expressed, and everyone was apparently happy with such an outcome.

Nothing more was done that day. Harris was fed and given a place to sleep. Next day every household brought out its fetishes. First were burned the fetishes from the Chief's compound, the great fetish Gboualegbe, Brengba (which had been brought by canoe from Cape Palmas), Mando, and others. Then those of the rest were burned, family by family.

Although nobody in the town had opposed Harris, the people in the villages around felt they needed their fetishes too much; they dared not let them be burned. The fetiçheurs decided to bring a sickness on Harris and, as their leader, Odu Oke, said, "If our fetishes cannot do this they are good for nothing." However, Harris did not get sick and these fetishes were added to the flames. He still met some opposition; one man hid his instead of bringing them in, but his head began to hurt and within a few days he was obviously demented. This was taken as a warning to waverers and after that, as Harris entered the villages, all the fetishes were heaped up and burned by him and the villagers were

baptized. Harris's message to them, in pidgin, was:

> Fetishes dey in town, in bush, in wattah ... God send me for come burn ... let no man go worship de fetish for fetish no good.

The people replied:

> You come here to burn de fetish ... you done burn all de fetish ... suppose person be sick, how we gon' to make medicine?

Harris said:

> If you believe God, all be nutting. Everyting be fit do you.[1]

He explained that when they went to gather medicinal leaves they should make a small prayer to God, do the same while they prepared the medicine, and again when they administered it. A man treated in this way would be sure to get better.

At one of the villages, Bassepé, there was a big fetish called Tadjo Soko and Harris went there in a company and destroyed it. That night there was a terrifying storm, with thunder and lightning, rain and wind. Harris came out in the open, called on the Lord's name, prayed, shook his calabashes, and sang his songs. The trembling people, witnessing this, were greatly relieved when the storm came to an end.

The next day was also busy for Harris, for he was led, at his command, to the men's bush to burn the fetish known as Dougoudou Brabré.[2] Following this, he baptized two chiefs and the Fanti traders at Lozoua.

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[1] These are quotations, set down as well as I could catch them, given by the old men of Lozoua, who speak pidgin fluently, though not French.

[2] There were branches of several firms here, buying mainly palm oil and kernels.

He chose a site for the church[1] and called everyone together to see it. He told them that on Sunday they were to come to church and do no work. They asked what sort of singing they should do in their worship and he told them to sing their traditional songs, but putting God's name in them.[2] They also asked:

> Soon you go ... who will show us?

He replied:

> White man will show you. That is why I give the work to clerks. If a white man comes and does not show the Bible he will be a lying man. Wait for man with Bible.[3]

That night a canoe arrived from the Administrateur at Grand Lahou and Harris was arrested and carried away. His work at Lozoua was cut short after about one month. This was probably at the beginning of October 1913.[4] He was carried to Lahou with arms and legs tied, but was allowed to have a coconut to drink when a stop was made.

In his report of the final three months of 1913, the Administrateur of the Cercle de Lahou wrote:

> I believe I ought to mention the passage in this district of a certain William Wadé Harris, a Liberian subject originally from Cape Palmas. This individual, calling himself 'prophet' and 'messenger of God to burn the fetishes' and to convert the natives

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1 The old men claim Harris said it should be a Methodist Church, as he was Methodist.

2 According to Platt, An African Prophet, op. cit., pp. 143-7, it was the Methodist Missionaries after 1924 who induced the converts to revive the old songs which had been put out of mind for ten years. Perhaps, however, the Didas had kept them alive independently.

3 Referred to individually or collectively as "Krak."

4 According to oral evidence of fourteen old men at Lahou, August 1963.

> to a kind of Protestantism seems to me rather a harmless maniac, and if I relate the fact in this report it is the better to describe once more the extreme credulity of the natives of the region and the superstitious beliefs that they manifest regarding everything in the religious sphere. The village of Lauzoua [sic] has carried the greater part of its fetishes to the prophet who has burned them: some children have received baptism from his hands and the construction of a hut to serve as a church was begun under his direction. Summoned to Lahou, Harris revealed to me his beliefs.[1]

It is unfortunate that the Administrateur did not think it worth while to note these beliefs; the details of what Harris preached are hardly to be gleaned from any contemporary written source until he reached Axim more than six months later. The Administrateur's account of his success at Lozoua makes very light of his accomplishment there, but it seems he did not visit the town himself. Certainly Harris had not baptized all the people, but since the fetishes had been destroyed the inhabitants definitely expected to be baptized, and as it turned out, it was done later by those "clarks" Harris had delegated at Ebonou.

According to tradition at Grand Lahou, Harris was arrested because certain fetish practitioners had heard what he was doing at Ebonou and Lozoua and tried to stop him with their powers before their fetish spirits were driven away too. It is said that the uncle of a man interpreting for Harris at Lozoua came to the Commandant and complained that Harris was coming to deceive the people in order to get their money and so should be driven away.[2] In their fear, the fetish

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[1] Abid. X-39-4, Report of Administrateur, Grand Lahou, 4th quarter 1913.

[2] Oral evidence of fourteen old men at Lahou, August 1963.

practitioners hastened the doom they were trying to avoid, for the Administrateur at once sent a canoe and guards to seize Harris and when he was in Lahou itself there was no concealing his power. The Administrateur was disgusted by the uproar.

> His presence ... aroused, during the few days he stayed there under surveillance, an exaggerated curiosity. The chief Latta, more superstitious than anyone else, among others brought him a succession of trifling presents, swearing to him that he was ready to be converted. He himself destroyed a part of his fetishes. The extravagances of this chief have been such that the greater part of the elders[1] have timidly asked me to get rid of 'the messenger of God.'[2]

The great fetish for Grand Lahou, a town of Didas and Avikams, as for all the tribes around, was Ziniaba (the "'Zri-Gnaba" of Ebonou) which was kept under the ground at Manjué, Cape Palmas, where only its personal priest could descend to contact the dread spirit. People went to the shrine from a vast area bringing objects which were filled with power by this deity, then brought home and worshipped as his symbol. Ziniaba was so powerful that nothing less than a cow was offered to him at Grand Lahou. As Harris came from the same area, it was assumed that he was well acquainted with this god.

The people at Lahou had to observe Wednesday, "Adabi," as sacred to the fetish, and on that day could not carry a bunch of palm nuts or a faggot of wood in the village, they were not to go to the bush, nor take a trip, do any work, pluck bananas, draw water, chop wood,

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[1] "Notables" in the original.

[2] Abid. X-39-4, Report of Administrateur, Lahou, 4th quarter 1913.

and fire guns. On that day the village was quiet; there could be singing but no noisy commotion. On that day women put aside their European clothes and wore Baoulé-made cotton cloths.[1] Because of the opposition of the Administration to the spirits, their symbols were hidden and worship was in secret, but Wednesday still remained a day of rest.

It is not certain whether the two women accompanying Harris had followed him to Lozoua or whether they stayed at Ebonou, but they soon joined him at Grand Lahou. However, the party was in Lahou only a few days and it is doubtful that Harris undertook any baptizing at that time. A certain Lambert Ackah appears to have played a large part in the Prophet's subsequent movements. Ackah had been out of town when Harris arrived and when he returned he was informed that "Warry Latagbo," a preacher, was in prison. Being a person of consequence in the Cercle, Ackah went along to the Administrateur and inquired into the preacher's offence. He received permission to visit Harris and having spoken to him and discovered to his satisfaction that Harris was an honest man whose motives were misunderstood by the Administrateur, Ackah called on the guard to release him. The guard naturally refused to do so without an official order. Ackah went to get it, saying, "Mon Commandant, this is a man who has come in the name of God. It is not just to leave him in prison with wrongdoers." The Administrateur

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[1] Old men at Lahou.

agreed that Harris could be assigned a hut beside the prison under surveillance.[1] When Ackah brought food and bedding Harris rejected the food, saying that Ackah had done enough for him.

Ackah and a young man, Latta Nandjué (or Gnadjoué) called again on the Commandant and asked him to allow Harris to leave the town. It was agreed that Nandjué could take him away. In Lahou the rumour went around that Harris had been freed from prison by a miracle and as he walked around the streets and preached, crowds came to him. When he saw the clerks from the firms listening to him he called out, "What are you doing here?" (i.e., "Why are you not instructing these people in Christianity?"). During the two days he was free he made no efforts to gather fetishes to burn or to baptize people. Nandjué arranged to take him by canoe to Kraffy and a throng gathered to see him off. He held his cross up high and said:

> I baptize you in the name of God.

And then, pointing the cross towards the town, said:

> Grand Lahou, I came in the name of God and you have not received me. But one day you will see the truth, for it was in the name of Christ that I came here.[2]

The actual activities of Harris during the next weeks are uncertain. The most reasonable supposition is that he stayed at the fishing village of Kraffy on the boundary between the Cercle de Lahou

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[1] Oral evidence of Lambert Ackah, Grand Lahou, August 1964.

[2] Lambert Ackah.

and the Cercle des Lagunes. Presumably, many people, particularly from inland across the lagoon, came to him there as his fame spread. Lahou, at any rate, had been convinced of the impotence of the fetishes by their failure to stop or kill Harris, and since Brown and one of his colleagues, Thomas, came and preached and baptized in Lahou after Harris's visit, there was ample opportunity for those who wished to embrace the new faith. Brown was accepted as Harris's deputy in all the region and Chief Gogo Latta, who died soon after, was one of the first to be baptized by them.[1]

Tradition says that the baptism given by the clerks was into "The Church of England,"[2] but it split up when the Fantis began taking collections. An assistant named "Kojo" was sent by Brown to instruct the separatist group and he did teach them hymns and Christian doctrine and read the Bible to them. On the other hand, he lay with women of the congregation in the evenings when they met to sing hymns, and demanded a great deal of money from the converts. This was so unsatisfactory that when Harris came the second time they asked for a new leader and he gave them Latta Nandjué, who commenced as preacher from January 1915. From that time there were two (or more) churches of Harris followers.[3]

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1 Old men at Lahou.

2 "Church of England" may simply have meant "Church of the English" or "Protestant" as used by the converts.

3 Old men at Lahou.

During the first half of 1914 while the ripples of Harris's work were circling out from Lahou, the official reports ignored it, while reporting such items of innovation as the opening of a school in the town of 15 April and the great use being made of the newly installed oil press. Not until 11 July was Harris again mentioned, and this time he was identified as being connected with the Salvation Army. The new Administrateur regretted that he had been hurried out of the Cercle so quickly,

> for the moral evolution begun among our indigenous population seemed interesting and we could perhaps have profited from it.

He described the marked effects at Ebonou and Lozoua and said:

> The struggle that we have engaged in against the feticheurs, particularly dangerous because of the practices of the ordeal and the veiled opposition they lead against our authority, had not been able to achieve any complete result, despite our tribunals and the severe punishments inflicted. In a few days that native obtained this unhoped for result.[1]

The Administration noticed that Ebonou and Lozoua had continued to be the centre of the Christianizing activities of the Protestant and Catholic clerks, and masses of Alladians had passed through Lahou and Ebonou under the benevolent gaze of the officials. The official reporting this knew of Harris only by hearsay but he understood he was remarkably intelligent, while his deputies were not particularly so. At any rate, the change taking place in the lives of the people cast a new light on their mentality which had seemed "particularly apathetic

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[1] Abid. X-39-4, Quarterly Political Report for Cercle de Grand Lahou, 11 July 1914.

and indifferent to the whole moral idea."[1]

By this time Lozoua, the reputed centre of fetishism and the slave trade, was being investigated by a permanent police officer who had ample proof of Chief Affoh's guilty exactions and abuse of power and anticipated his exile. Beyond Lozoua, the inhabitants saw only the burdens of the French presence, and the "peaceful penetration" desired by the Administration could only be effected as they saw its benefits in the prosperity brought by commerce. Even in the middle of 1914 the greater part of the Dida population had no contact with the world outside.[2]

The Cercle des Lagunes

From Lahou Harris went to Kraffy, a tiny fishing village on the margin of the Cercle de Lahou, and actually located in the next cercle, the Cercle des Lagunes. The people who flocked there,[3] or to other centres in the Cercle, to listen to him included representatives of the peoples who lived on the great sand bar which divides the Ebrié Lagoon from the sea, as well as the inland tribes beyond the Lagoon

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1 Abid. X-39-4, Quarterly Political Report for Cercle de Grand Lahou, 11 July 1914.

2 Abid. X-39-4, Quarterly Political Report for Cercle de Grand Lahou, 11 July 1914.

3 It is evident that the numbers who met Harris at Kraffy have been much exaggerated by writers on the Harris movement, for only a deputation went from most villages. In many cases it is not clear on their evidence that it was not to Lahou or Ebonou that they went, and a disciple, not Harris himself, who baptized and instructed them.

fringes. The population of the Cercle included Aizis (or Addiês), Alladians, Adjoukrous, Ebriês, Abidjis, and away inland Agnis, Attiês, and Abbeys. Most of these peoples, ethnically close to the Agni-Ashanti family,[1] had offered no resistance to French suzerainty, and in fact, as their numbers were not very great, they had little hope of doing so. The chief town of the area and its administrative headquarters was Dabou, on the inner side of the Lagoon, among the Adjoukrous. Here, from the early days of European activity along the Coast, the interior tribes met to trade with the Coastal people (Ebriês and Alladians) who acted as middlemen and traded directly with the Europeans. From 1843 there were French traders there, but hostility developed (probably because the traders left no room for native middlemen) and the natives became pugnacious. In 1853 the French Admiral Baudin "chastised" the Ebriês gathered at Eboué and following that, a stone fort was constructed at Dabou by Faidherbe. This fort, abandoned in 1870, was reoccupied in 1892 and became the residence of the Administrator of the District. The first Catholic missionaries came to Dabou in October 1896.[2]

Harris made his greatest impact on the lagoon peoples who, in religious and social matters, had similar traditions and practices. Adjoukrou practices may be taken to exemplify the social organization. To begin with, they (like the Grebos) were strictly stratified according

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1 Joseph, op. cit., p. 107.

2 Gorju, op. cit., p. 25.

to age-groups, each with its particular role to play in tribal life. Most interesting were the old men, the elders, who were divided into four groups: the Milakŋ , the Lêl, the Makpikŋ , and the Ebebou. The Milakŋ were very old, the "cinders," consumed, without substance, standing on the frontier between the living and the dead. The oldest among them in the whole of Adjoukrou country was the Pap, and he exercised a moral leadership over religious, political, and military matters. The next class, the Lêl, "paper calabash," were the conservers of knowledge and of tribal history. They were thinkers and so offered an intellectual usefulness. The Makpikŋ , "tree of the palisade" (i.e., planted to strengthen it) served a moral and intellectual function, while the Ebebou actually were essential to the life of the community. They blessed the warriors, decided on peace or war, offered the sacrifices to the ancestors, and called down the rain. Each age-group spanned eight years, so it was the youngest section of these elders, the Ebebou, who were the leaders, especially the religious leaders, of the villages. The three age-groups senior to them were too feeble to wield any real authority.[1]

The oldest man in the village acted as Pap there, supreme chief and priest, even though his age-group might be the Ebebou. The prosperity of the village depended on him, as intermediary with the ancestral spirits, and when misfortune struck the villagers gathered

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[1] Oral evidence of an Adjoukrou scholar, August 1963.

in his yard to ask him to forgive them for whatever offence they had committed. When he had done so they handed him a bottle containing water or spirits which he opened in the middle of the street and poured into a piece of coconut shell which he emptied drop by drop on the ground, calling by name the most illustrious ancestors of the village and asking them to calm their anger. He finished by pronouncing a curse or blessing. Similarly, the head of each clan and each family played the same role in his group.

Obviously, no new religion would make much headway with the people until the Ebebou group had been induced to accept it and conversely, if this group did accept it, there would be little chance of the younger members of the village or family being able to maintain the old faith.

There was a varied spirit world enmeshing the Adjoukrous. Each village naturally had its particular god or spirit living at one end of the hamlet, or in the nearby river, or in the pool where the women went for water. To the water-god they offered sacrifices so that he would always provide water for them, protect all who drank his water, and make the women of the village fruitful. When these things were not given, and especially when the water dried up, it was obvious that the god was annoyed and was refusing his protection. Every river-god had a day of rest once a week, when no one went near the water. What was needed that day was brought home the day before.

The great old trees around the village represented other gods,

those who protected the village against attack. Before going to war the young men would offer sacrifices beneath these trees. Sacrifices were also constantly made to spirits at certain rocks and other spots.

Besides these traditional gods, individuals and family heads were in the habit of buying gods from ambulating prophets. These prophets would stay a few weeks with the purchaser to show him how their ritual of worship should be carried on. Such powerful imported gods as Mando, Dibi, and Tanou[1] were possessed by the whole village as a guardian against witchcraft. They had their own temples, courts of sacrifice, and services. The sacrificateur was priest and prophet and spoke to the gods. On the god's special day the priest judged the witches and evil-doers gathered before the temple. If there had been accidents or sudden death he would administer the ordeal of poison to the suspects. The frequent reliance on this ordeal had, as one effect, a constant thinning out of the populations.

Known of, but far removed from men, were the Great God--the Sky God and Prime Mover ("Nyam" to the Adjoukrous)--and the Earth God, but they had no system of worship and were referred to only when taking oaths or giving curses or blessings.[2]

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[1] Tanou or Ta Kora was the great river god of both the Gold Coast and the Ivory Coast, and was the chief god, after Nyam, of the Adjoukrous, according to Parrinder, West African Religion, op. cit., pp. 56-7. His priests dressed in white and sprinkled holy water on his followers.

[2] L. Lassm, "Beliefs and Customs of the Adjoukrous," an unpublished collection. This substantiates such authorities as D. Westermann, Africa and Christianity, London, 1937, p. 65: "The high-god is, as a rule, not the object of a religious cult and is of small or almost no significance in practical religion."

This was the pantheon of spirits and gods Harris found among the Adjoukrous and their neighbours, and since it was not strange to him he was not faced with any sense of unreality of the sort which a white missionary would have felt. Harris accepted that these gods and spirits existed but, like the early Christian missionaries in Europe, he regarded them as demons and devils subject to Satan.

Another belief of all these Ivory Coast peoples with which he was, of course, familiar concerned the causes of sickness and its cure. Sickness might come on a man from a witch who was secretly devouring the affected part, or from God as a punishment for secret offences, or because the dissatisfied dead had decided to snatch him from among the living. Smallpox was attributed only to witches, but in the case of other sicknesses the cause had to be sought. One of the first things any afflicted person must do was to confess his sins in case he had incurred a divine punishment.

The French were perhaps more active in the Cercle des Lagunes in pressing their ideas on the inhabitants than in any other Cercle. During 1913 the Administration laboured among the Alladians and Adjoukrous, Abbeys, Abidjis, Attiés, and M'Batos to carry out their civilizing mission. Chiefs from the five districts of the Cercle, Dabou and Abidjan Rural along the coast, and Adzopé, Agboville, and Alepé in the interior, had been gathered together at Bouaké to see the wonders of the new railway and to glimpse the possibilities it held for the commercial development

of the colony.[1] It is possible that, as the authorities hoped, the chiefs were impressed by the practical advantages of this railway which had devoured so much of the labour of their young men in the past years and which had aroused such resentment among all the people, but doubtful that they felt gratitude to the French for it. It seemed to the Administrateur, at any rate, that the enlarged view they received of the country and the variety of its inhabitants gave them a greater respect for the unity of power possessed by the French, along with a new sense of their own fellowship or common interests in being subject to it. These ideas would "greatly facilitate the evolution of native politics, impeded till now by the individualistic spirit characterizing the inhabitant of the forest."[2]

Striving as they were to make the inhabitants plant bananas, yams, and cocoa, and produce more oil and palm nuts, their efforts greeted generally by indifference, the officials hoped that something would jar them out of their "inertia." Some tribes already seemed to be responding. Some Alladians and Adjoukrous were already known as workers and traders, and some Abbeys and Attiés were showing an interest in trade.[3]

By frequent tours of inspection the officials made themselves known and, they hoped, liked by the indigenes. By the building of roads

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[1] Abid. X-46-24, Report for Cercle des Lagunes, 1st quarter 1913.

[2] Abid. X-46-24, Report for Cercle des Lagunes, 1st quarter 1913.

[3] Abid. X-46-24, Report for Cercle des Lagunes, 1st quarter 1913.

and the encouragement of the forest industries and plantation crops, with the intensive utilization of the available labour, not only were energies harnessed and French authority confirmed, but individuals were to be enriched and the economy of the country raised up. In July 1913 the Administrateur could say:

> From this double point of view ... the method of the obligation to work which has been applied has given excellent results during these past three months.[1]

During the year the forced labour was obtained without incident. The Abbeys were reported to be taking the advice given them and were making progress, but the Ebriés were unmoved, while the M'Batos of the Alepé region, who had been grouped in large well planned villages, were showing a distaste for discipline and obedience. Some were even reconstructing their isolated hamlets and were avoiding the Chef de Poste when he came to visit them.[2]

Such was the tenor of ways in the Cercle des Lagunes in the year before the Prophet Harris appeared to announce the new order in a way which the people could understand. The French, proud to be representing a secular civilization, offered labour with its material rewards to a people with no concept of life divorced from religion, no concept of regular labour which had no immediate and tangible results, and which had developed scarcely any wants not satisfied by customary means. Yet

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1 Abid. X-46-24, Report for Cercle des Lagunes, 2nd quarter 1913.

2 Abid. X-46-24, Report for Cercle des Lagunes, 4th quarter 1913.

that old world of traditional ways was dissolving before their eyes, and the Chef de Poste with his constant visits, his demands for the prestation[1] and the capitation, and his uprooting of them from the little hamlets where they had always lived,[2] represented the death of the old ways and the beginning of some unknowable future.

The people, quite untouched by Christianity, either looked to their gods and spirits to help them against the French or looked to the French to help them against the spirits. In some cases, the French officers were eager to head the battle against superstition and there are several examples from the heart of the Cercle of their efforts.

The Chef de Poste at Dabou reported in April 1912 that he had had

> ... occasion to break up and burn, on the demand of certain inhabitants, some fetishes which served to exploit the credulity of the natives. Since this fact has been known, they have, spontaneously and in various villages, brought to the Poste to be destroyed many other fetishes, "mandos" or "medicines," which were causing an intense dread among the population.
>
> It is to be wished that the total disposal of all these objects, of a composition as unsavoury as of forms varied and bizarre, may bring in train very soon the ruin of the dangerous species of feticheurs which has been up to now the gravest obstacle to our civilizing activity in the region.[3]

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[1] According to L.P. Mair, Native Policies in Africa, London, 1936, p. 199, the prestation system meant that every adult male gave 10 or 15 days unpaid labour on work of public interest, for example, modes of communication, near his home. In practice, the prestataires were often carried far from their homes and made to work longer than the legal number of days.

[2] Joseph, op. cit., p. 153, describes this regroupment and details its advantages for the native population.

[3] Abid. X-46-27, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, April 1912.

In September of the same year, his successor in the same district wrote:

> I continued, on the 11th of last month, at Débrimou, with the destruction of the fetishes begun and nearly finished in all the region by M. le Chef de Poste Audrien. This operation did not present any difficulty. Spontaneously, the young men and the adults took hold of machetes and went together to the places where some 'tanos' still stood. These were real nests of mosquitos, which found a favourable environment for their hatching in the tureens and basins full of stagnant and muddy water, in the midst of all kinds of decomposing matter; I have moreover ascertained that in nearly all the villages I have passed through since the destruction of the fetishes, that destruction has been final, and that only a few attempts at reconstruction have been made in spite of the counsels offered by certain old men of the villages to the adult men.[1]

The same man in October added on the subject:

> I have again been confirmed in my certainty that the information I furnished on this subject was exact, and if it would be rash to state that certain customs and rites which are not compatible with our civilizing activity will disappear here, between one day and the next, it does seem to me that one can correctly, at least as regards this district, foresee an end very soon to the manifestations of fetishism.[2]

The Cercle des Lagunes: Kraffy

In December 1913 and again in December 1914 Harris was at Kraffy. Because of the difficulty of correlating accounts of vast crowds meeting him there with specific dates, it cannot definitely be said at which date most people came to him. During his first visit his activities there started rumours in every direction as to his powers and

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1 Abid. X-46-27, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, September 1912.

2 Abid. X-46-27, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, October 1912.

purpose. Traditional accounts of meeting Harris there could apply to either date but have usually been assumed to be the earlier. An account from an Ebrié village not far from Abidjan describes how everyone heard that a great spirit was coming, one who could be understood by all men and not simply by those who were priests or were possessed. Whole families embarked in their dug-out canoes to find this wonder, usually preceded by exploratory groups.

The villagers soon learned that Harris was not a supernatural being. They asked, "Are you the great spirit of whom they speak?" "No," he replied, "I am a man coming in the name of God, and I am going to baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost--and you will be a people of God." People were naturally disappointed; they had thought to find a new god. The sorciers, those inhabited by evil spirits, witches, all tested his power (and its source) by falling into fits, during which they foamed at the mouth and stuffed earth between their teeth. When Harris saw them in this condition, he lifted up his cane cross and held it toward the sky while he danced all around. This apparently baffled the spirits of evil who departed, and the chastened people stood up and accepted the baptism. This capitulation removed any doubts the rest might have felt.[1]

Members of the Aizi tribe, a small grouping in the area near Kraffy, offer an interesting explanation of the purpose of the calabashes

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[1] Oral evidence of Abraham Nandjui, an old Methodist "Preacher," at Sanfon-Tê, an Ebrié village, August 1963.

with which Harris and the women accompanied their singing. These beaded instruments were the same as those used in the old days to call a fetish spirit and sing his praise. They believe that Harris had been a fetish priest and knew the power of this instrument.[1] Since it was essential for the fetish spirits to be destroyed, along with the objects they could inhabit, the calabashes were clashed to summon them before the fetishes were burned, and the spirits, imprisoned, were consumed in the flames.[2]

At Kraffy Harris shook his calabash as he came forward to baptize, then held it dangling under his Bible in the left hand, while on the Bible rested the little bowl which was to hold the water. While the presumed "wife and daughter" continued shaking their calabashes, he raised his cross to Heaven and said, "O God, if Thou hast sent me, give me water, that I may baptize those who ask for it." Then he lowered the cross and as he tipped it, water ran out of the hollow top and filled his bowl.

When he touched with this water anyone who was hiding fetish objects or who was possessed by evil spirits, this person would become crazed and rush off into the bush or struggle on the sand. Harris would drive the spirit out by putting his sheepskin scarf on the person's head

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[1] Amon-d'Aby, op. cit., p. 150, notes this belief, and it is mentioned in an appendix in Bianquis, op. cit., p. 35.

[2] Oral evidence of old men at Tefredji, Île Deblay, August 1963. In support, it is certain that the Church of the Twelve Apostles in Ghana regards the calabashes as the means by which Harris summoned the spirits of healing.

and his Bible on top of that. By the same actions, Harris healed those who were sick, and people paralyzed for many years were permanently cured by him.[1]

Although Harris gave advice about living a new life, his message during his first passage was very simple: God was good, He was Love. The fetishes must be destroyed, all must be baptized and worship God in the church they were to build. He quoted from the Bible which he held before them (though he did not open it and read from it) and said that white men had sent him and would follow him to teach men to read the Bible. For the governing of their churches, he chose the most suitable representative of the villagers who had come, and sometimes he chose eleven other men to assist them. The twelve were known as the Twelve Apostles of the Church, and their leader, the "Chef d'Église," as the "Peter," though the latter title may have been bestowed by Harris's Fanti deputies. In many village churches the full system begun by the Prophet at Kraffy was never inaugurated, and the "Chef" or Preacher was sole director. Probably the Prophet forgot or was too busy to appoint men for all villages, or to tell the people to choose them. At any rate, the ruling age-group usually provided the leadership by his decision or their own tradition.

The Aizi of the area had thought of men of other tribes as being objects to capture and sacrifice at necessary intervals. Harris

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[1] Roux, op. cit., p. 139. Platt, An African Prophet, op. cit., p. 86.

taught them to live in peace with these neighbours, who were also children of God. They followed his teaching readily, not because he performed miracles, but because they tested and proved the truth of his preaching. He said that as God had blessed everything, there was nothing impure, so people could travel by paths believed taboo and eat foods classed as taboo. They began doing these things, suffered no ill effects, and consequently believed in the power of God and the life eternal Harris promised.

At Tefredji the chief fetish practitioner was chosen by Harris to be the Preacher, and it was he who began the burning of the fetish objects.[1]

The Cercle des Lagunes: Jacqueville and Audouin

After some time Harris left Kraffy and went eastward again. He passed quickly through a large part of the Alladian country until he arrived at Jacqueville or Half Jack, the largest agglomeration of these "Jacks,"[2] who were a people with a long experience of trade with the English merchants (being their intermediaries with the lagoon peoples who provided the palm oil) and had come to use the English language as their second tongue. When the French took control of the area they were anxious that French should supersede English and wished to have a school

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1 Old men at Tefredji.

2 Gorju, op. cit., pp. 55-6.

established there. The Catholic Missionaries were asked to take responsibility for the school and with it the advance of French culture and civilization on the Alladian Coast. Flattered by the trust reposed in them, they opened their school in May 1898. The chiefs were exhorted to send children there, and some thirty-two pupils commenced instruction initially. From this beginning it was hoped that the younger generation would grow up speaking French. One would have assumed that another aim would have been to plant Christianity in the region, but if there was any success in this, it was only among the school boys.

As Harris walked along the sandy beach, he stopped at village after village and spoke briefly of the need to destroy the fetishes and be baptized, but his reception was generally cool and even antagonistic. He did not stop to baptize; he told them that when they were ready they should go to Brown at Petit Lahou (Ebonou). When he had gone on his words bore fruit, but this development will be described later.

Harris may have stayed at Jacqueville a few weeks, long enough for his presence to attract people from across the lagoon. An Ebrié named Megnan from Sanfon-Tê crossed over when his special fetish spirit (he was a noted fetish practitioner and on intimate terms with gods and spirits) told him, "I am not powerful now because God brings a man who is more powerful, so I cannot live here but must go to another country." Megnan sought out Harris and was baptized, and though he did not take an office in the church, he was a strong and prayerful Christian the

rest of his days.[1]

Presumably, Harris went to the Catholic Church and spoke to the Missionaries, and they saw him preaching and baptizing. As at Kraffy, he filled the bowl with water from his staff, in such quantity that it sometimes spilled on those being baptized. What was left he simply threw away.[2] He asked individuals from far away to carry his news to their villages where he would not be going.

Some months after Harris had gone on to the Gold Coast at least one of his disciples took up quarters at Jacqueville and offered the baptism to pilgrims who came from the coastal and inland parts. "Sam"[3] was the name by which they knew him, and he would appear to the crowd, impressive in suit and tie, in the afternoon when a bell would ring. He asked first whether all their fetishes had been burned. When the crowd, an assortment from many different villages and tribes, had answered affirmatively (everyone knew that it was not safe to be baptized without having destroyed the fetish objects), they were sent away to rest until the next day. The pilgrims had brought their own food and made their beds in the clean soft sand which covers all the Alladian Coast.

Next day when the bell rang people settled themselves in rows under and around a shelter built of bamboo and palm fronds. Sam baptized

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1 Abraham Nandjui.

2 Oral evidence of Gnagne Jerome at Orbaf, August 1964.

3 Sam was perhaps Samuel Reffell, noted offically as a Harris disciple. Oral tradition gives a Momo as being at Jacqueville also.

them holding his Bible in one hand and dipping water with the other from a soup bowl held by an assistant, sprinkling the water on the lowered heads while reciting the formula. It does not appear that he taught anything; once they were baptized they could go home.[1]

The Ebriés live east of the Adjoukrous on the mainland, and of the Alladians on the seashore. Like the Adjoukrous, they are governed by the old men; their Nana corresponds to the Adjoukrou Pap. The "chef de famille" is a most important personage among them; formerly, he guarded the family fetish, sacrificed to the ancestral spirits, and remembered and recited the family legends. As with their neighbours, the Ebriés were led by their mature and responsible age-group, the priests and teachers of the old faith, to embrace that brought by Harris.

Harris first encountered members of this tribe when some of them came to Kraffy, but he visited none of their important villages until he came back from the Gold Coast. With his permission, the village of Audouin, not far from Abidjan, became a centre for his baptism through a new deputy. A Fanti trader there named Goodman had heard of the Prophet's work at Kraffy and sent two messengers to invite him to Audouin. Harris questioned the two, Gras and Labiou, and when he discovered that Goodman was a practising Methodist, he sent him a Bible with word to begin baptizing the people himself.

Goodman had no difficulty in gaining acceptance as sharing in

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[1] Oral evidence of old men at Mopoyeme, August 1964.

Harris's power, and though the villagers had once before burned their fetishes at the behest of the Catholic Fathers and then bought new ones when sickness came to the village, they brought them to Goodman to be burned again. As they watched them burn, they lost forever their reverence for the spirits they represented, and the two leading practitioners of the old faith became the Preachers in the two sections of the village.

When the news of Goodman's power reached the mainland, many Ebriés travelled to the village and were baptized. There, as in Harris's own presence, the practitioners of evil collapsed in fits which Goodman cured by tapping the person on the head three times with his Bible.[1]

The Cercle de Bassam

From Jacqueville Harris proceeded quickly along the beach, spending the nights in fishing camps on the ocean side and completely by-passing most of the villages on the lagoon side. He stopped for one night at Petit Bassam, but talked only to the English-speaking people who offered him hospitality.

At Grand Bassam, the largest port of the colony with a cosmopolitan population in which the natives were a minority, he intended to make a halt. He was accommodated first by a Mrs. Hannah Johnson, a native of Cape Palmas whom he had known in boyhood, and by a Mr. Polkey. He had hardly begun preaching when he was brought under arrest to the

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[1] Oral evidence of a number of inhabitants at Audouin, August 1964.

Administrateur of the Cercle de Bassam and ordered to leave forthwith. He flew into a rage, cursed the officer and the sergeant who had arrested him, and said they would die for laying hands on God's prophet. He was horrified to see ships being loaded on Sunday, and said that a ship would burn there next day ... and perhaps it did. It had a cargo of coal which may have been smouldering some time unnoticed.[1]

He left Bassam and continued eastward. A week later Cêcaldi, the Administrateur of Grand Bassam, died.[2]

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[1] Benoit's Report.

[2] J. Hartz, "Le Prophète Harris Vu par Lui-Même," Devant les Sectes Non-Chrétiennes, Bruges, 1961, p. 120. An extract from Father Hartz's journal, presented by G. van Bulck. The date of the death of the Administrateur is given as 15 January 1914; this has yet to be verified.

CHAPTER III

THE PROPHET HARRIS IN THE GOLD COAST

In the Gold Coast Harris received the acclaim and attention which, spread by rumour, made his reputation all along the Coast. Yet the eventual effect of his work there was not so pronounced as in the Ivory Coast. Probably this was due to the weaker colonial tensions and the stronger position the churches had already made for themselves there.

The Axim District of the Western Province, where his work took place, was the home of two peoples, the Ahantas and the Nzimas or Apollonians. The latter name, derived from Cape Apollonia which was in turn named for the saint upon whose day the Portuguese sighted it, was used by Europeans rather than by the natives themselves. Western Apollonia, with its capital at Beyin, was separated from the Ivory Coast by the River Tano and the Tendo Lagoon. Eastern Apollonia, with its chief at Attuabo, was bounded by the Ancobra River about four miles short of Axim. East of the Ancobra was Ahanta country. Originally, Busua had been the paramount stool, but in the course of time Axim Lower Town and Axim Upper Town had become very important chieftaincies.

Both languages spoken in the area are linked to the Anyi-Baoulé cluster,[1] and at least the dominating element of both peoples came from inland some centuries ago, the Ahantas (traditionally) from southern

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[1] See above pp. 84-5.

Ashanti and the Nzimas from west of Tekyeman.[1] The population of the area was fairly sparse and the towns small. The census of 1911 showed the sizable centres as Axim (3,285 inhabitants), Attuabo (780), Beyin (1,524), and Half Assinie (1,007).

As Axim was the greatest town of the region, it had a much more mixed population than the others. As at Tarkwa and Sekondi, there was a settlement of Kru labourers; apparently they came from country under French control, leaving there to escape the prestation.[2] Axim grew on the timber trade as the great forests of mahogany along the Tano and the Ancobra were exploited, but exploited blindly. Much immature timber was cut, there was no reforestation, and the Forestry Bill which was drawn up provoked so much misunderstanding and antagonism that it was not passed. Axim, which called itself the biggest timber exporting port in the world, rapidly declined from that position.[3] In 1913, when there were three British logging companies, two German, and one American, there was such activity that the market was depressed and in 1914 there was much less activity. The value of exports in the District fell from £335,841 in 1913 to £216,642 in 1914 and £107,864 in 1915. Imports

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1 "Record Book of Axim District, 1914-1930," National Archives of Ghana, Accra. Hereafter cited as "Axim Record Book."

2 J.R. Raphael, Through Unknown Nigeria, London, 1914, p. 8.

3 Axim Record Book.

showed a similar fall, from £158,530 to £130,384 to £67,165 in 1915.[1] Part of this must, of course, be blamed on the war and the shortage of shipping. Whatever the cause, the figures are such as to indicate that there was a definite dependence on the money coming into the region, and that the collapse of the market in the early part of 1914 would affect a sizable part of the population.

Other than the timber, there seems to have been no commodity produced for the world market, because in the next few years the Administrative officers were making efforts to introduce the inhabitants to the planting of coconuts and production of copra (from 1916 on),[2] rice, and cocoa.

The only two Christian churches to be found in the Axim District in 1914 were the Wesleyan Methodist and the Roman Catholic. The Wesleyan Methodists had been established longest in the Gold Coast, their first missionary, Joseph R. Dunwell, having arrived at Cape Coast Castle in 1834. Dunwell and many who followed him died before they could make a substantial impression, but under the Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman, an English-born mulatto,[3] the Wesleyan Methodists built up a considerable following among the Fanti population. Since the Fantis were fairly

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1 Axim Record Book.

2 Axim Record Book. The Director of Agriculture offered seed coconuts at 10/- per hundred, or free to influential chiefs.

3 He was not "a West Indian Negro half-caste," as stated in Cooksey and McLeish, op. cit., p. 138.

enterprising and were better educated in mission schools than many other West Coast people, they were to be found wherever there was money to be made in trade, along with the ubiquitous Sierra Leoneans. Many of the Sierra Leoneans were also Methodists, so the Wesleyan Methodist Church had widely scattered nuclear congregations, though no official cognizance was taken of them.

In 1880 missionaries of the Catholic Société des Missions Africaines de Lyon began work at Elmina and spread from there. The Catholic population of Nzima grew steadily from that time. However, the majority were unconscious of any advantages offered by Christianity, and even in 1914 human sacrifice was said to exist.[1]

The Axim Circuit of the Gold Coast District of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1911 included Axim itself, as headquarters, with a large church of which the Rev. Elias Butler, Superintendant of the Circuit, was minister. The congregations of the Circuit were to be found at Essiama, Attuaboe, Beyin, Half Assinie, and in the Ivory Coast at Assinie, Aboisso, and Grand Bassam.[2] During 1913 the work was progressing satisfactorily; at Axim ninety converts were made through camp meetings, at Half Assinie a Mission House was built and the new chapel fitted with an organ, but though Half Assinie and Aboisso had flourishing

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[1] C.W. Armstrong, The Winning of West Africa, London, 1920, p. 38.

[2] The Gold Coast Annual: or, The Year Book of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in the Gold Coast District, West Africa, 1912, Cape Coast, 1912. Hereafter cited as The Gold Coast Annual.

Sunday Schools, the others did not.[1]

The Synod of the Wesleyan Methodists was generally held in February, and that held at Accra from 14-24 February 1914 decided that Axim Circuit should be split in two, with a new circuit centred on Grand Bassam to be called the "Ivory Coast Mission," while the Gold Coast section alone would constitute Axim Circuit. The Rev. H.G. Martin, an English missionary, was to take charge of the new circuit, assisted by J.G. Koomson, an Assistant African Minister who had already, as a ministerial candidate, spent a year at Bassam. The Rev. Ernest Bruce was posted to Axim to replace Butler.[2]

The priest in charge of the Roman Catholic Mission was Father Stauffer, from Alsace. He took charge in July 1912 after many years in another section of the Gold Coast. He and Elias Butler were soon on bad terms, particularly after April 1913 when Butler broke down the church door at Oirkotoe. This church had been built by one of the villagers, old "Papa" Essien, and presented to the Wesleyans, who were in return to provide a teacher for the village. When they did not do so "Papa" Essien became a Catholic and asked the Catholic Mission to use the church.

Father Stauffer naturally brought charges against Butler and the case was heard in Sekondi on 16 October 1913. The Wesleyans were

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1 The Gold Coast Annual, 1913.

2 "Minutes of United Synod and of European Committee--Gold Coast District, 1914." From 1917 these Synod minutes were entitled "Minutes of the Gold Coast District Synod & Local Committee." Hereafter cited as"Min. G.C.S."

represented by Messrs. Casely Hayford and Renner, the Catholics by Messrs. C. Christian and Ribeiro. The judgment was delivered in favour of the Wesleyans, the Fathers being found guilty of trespass. Their petition of appeal was lost and Father Stauffer, concluding that it had been suppressed by the District Commissioner's clerk, felt that the Wesleyans were all Freemasons and too strong for him.[1] His feelings must be remembered when considering his subsequent account of the visit of the Prophet Harris.

Apollonia

The people of Half Assinie, the most westerly centre in Apollonia, had heard in advance that "Professor"[2] Harris was coming. He arrived with two women and as at first there was little interest, he and the women made a din and announced that he was doing the work of God and everyone should be baptized. People assembled, and Harris held up his cross before them and asked all the fetish priests to come and take hold. When they did so the spirits came into them and they began shaking. Harris cried out in a loud voice, driving out the spirits, then he rested the Bible on their heads, and at a later time they were baptized. This persuaded many people to come to him. He began by preaching that all who had "jujus" and were possessed of evil spirits should throw the jujus into the sea, and some did this. When the owner

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1 Father Stauffer's Journal.

2 Throughout this district the title "Professor" rather than "Prophet" was given to Harris.

of a special juju was afraid to do it, Harris came and sprinkled water on it. This drove the spirit out and the juju could be cast into the sea.[1]

This went on day after day, but not everyone was convinced. The Catholic Father Fisher observed his work but said nothing, while the Methodist Catechist, A.P. Organ, warned people that he came from the Devil. Yet his work brought them larger congregations, for when at dusk and at dawn Harris and his two companions attracted people by going about the town shaking their calabashes and singing their songs, the Prophet's only instruction was "Go to church."

After Harris's visit the sacrifices to the local deities (the lagoons Awiane Aluanu and Amazule) ceased for a time and the churches were full of converts. The two most prominent fetish priests were women, Kua Manza and Atua. The latter was rid of her "spirit" by Harris, but later it returned and she resumed her fetish practice. Then she received a nickname, Betua Bendu, "it cannot be cast away."

For Half Assinie, the coming of Harris was the real beginning of civilization. No longer were menstruating women segregated in special huts but followed the practice of Christians in staying at home and working in the bush as ordinarily. Similarly, newly-widowed men and women no longer had to stay on the beach for eight days. Many more children were sent to school from this time and cleanliness became highly esteemed. These things happened in every Apollonian town he visited.

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[1] Oral evidence of one of the two Town Captains and a group of old men at Half Assinie, December 1963.

While Harris continued eastward he was followed by many people who had not been baptized. They had discovered after his departure that their neighbours who were most familiar with supernatural forces had become truly converted. They felt they must do the same, and eventually caught up with the Prophet, who baptized them separately from the townspeople where he was.[1]

He went on to Beyin where, although he was regarded as inferior, being a Kru, he was lodged in one of the best houses in town, after he had shown his power. The fetish priests tried him but found him too strong so they, along with all those possessed by evil spirits, accepted baptism. His chief command at Beyin was that people should join a church and obey its rules.[2]

Leaving the capital of Western Apollonia, Harris came next to Attuabo, capital of the Eastern division. The populace had been hearing of his deeds all the way from the Ivory Coast and the native doctors had been waiting to challenge him. They received word that he had left Beyin and confidently assembled to intercept him. Harris met them in front of the Omanhene's palace. He took the initiative by making the sign of the cross with his cross and reciting some incantations. In response there came a supernatural thundering from the sky, and from that moment there was fear of the man.

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1 Town captains and old men at Half Assinie.

2 Mr. Anthony, Beyin, April 1964.

Next morning Erzeah Kabie Angem, a leading medicinal healer who used both natural and supernatural remedies, shouted openly among the populace that Harris was wonderful "and you should obey him." Presumably, he had tried his powers against Harris in the night and had failed to harm him. At any rate, he was the first person in Attuabo to bring his magical paraphernalia forward, discard them publicly, and accept the Prophet's baptism. The rest of the people with a few exceptions immediately followed his example; those who did not later burned their fetishes in private and went to the Prophet at Axim.

Harris remained in Attuabo for two weeks. In every group which came to him he baptized first the children, then the adults. When people possessed by spirits came to him they would tremble. Harris and the two women would shake their calabashes and Harris would dance with the afflicted person. When the power entered him he stopped shaking the calabash, took his staff, recited some conjuring prayers, then commanded the evil spirit to leave the man. The latter would then become sane and normal and would be baptized.

Most of the sorcerers, healers, and possessed remained good Christians and Erzeah Kabie Angem, in particular, became a Catholic on being relieved of his devil and remained a devout one to his death.

Here again Harris issued no rules but told people to obey the laws of the Church: "I am just baptizing you. Those who live by the rules of the Church will have eternal life; those who do not will have

death." Among those baptized was the Omanhene of Eastern Apollonia, Awulae Erzoah, with his elders, at his palace.

Soon after Harris left, on Ascension Day, Thursday, there was an eclipse of the sun; as a result, Thursday was thereafter regarded as a holy day and people ceased to go to the bush on that day.[1]

Axim

Harris made no long stops until he came to Essiama and here he stayed for some weeks, making several day trips to Axim during that time and going out in other directions.[2] His first visit was remembered by a boy who witnessed it as being attended by a great commotion in the Upper Town early in the morning. Running to the scene he saw Harris and his women, preceded by half a dozen sheep and followed by perhaps a thousand people, descending towards the Lower Town. He asked the way to the Omanhene's palace and the crowd conducted him there. Then he had a conversation with the Omanhene, Kwame Benti, and his elders who were assembled as quickly as possible. He told them he came from Tabou (Kruland), sent by God to heal sickness and to teach people how to worship Him. He then asked them to explain to him their customary laws. Then, according to his wish, the Omanhene had the gong-gong beaten around the town to warn people that they were to come next morning

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[1] Oral evidence of Elder Buah Nrezah, Attuabo, April 1964.

[2] The Gold Coast Leader, 20-27 June 1914, and oral evidence of Sub-Chief Tumunli Kwesi of Lower Town Axim, April 1964.

to be baptized.[1]

Apparently, Harris had already made a secret first visit at the requests of the Chiefs of Upper and Lower Town, who sent their linguists, bearing their staffs, to bring him from where he was baptizing in Apollonia to the bedside of the dying wife of the Chief of Upper Town. Harris laid his white-draped cross along beside her and said, "Take the stick, rise up, and walk."[2] The woman did so, and thereafter led a normal life.

Harris evidently found wide variations in the positions taken by the Christian pastors whom he met. When he was first approaching Axim, the Methodist incumbent was Butler and he warned his members that all who had anything to do with "that false prophet" would do so at risk of being turned out of the church.[3] On the other hand, Butler's successor, Ernest Bruce, who arrived some weeks later, was very friendly. The Catholic Missionary, Father Stauffer, was definitely hostile, despite the formal visit Harris made to him in the second week of June.

Harris told the Father that he was one of nine prophets sent to convert the world and that he had been ordered by the Angel Gabriel to destroy the fetishes and bring all people to serve God. He had no

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1 Tumunli Kwesi.

2 Oral evidence of J.P. Ephson, Elmina, August 1963, who claimed to have had the story from the woman's son-in-law. In 1914 he was a shorthand typist with Swanzy and Mills, Axim.

3 E. Bruce, "I Grew Up with History," African Challenge, VII, 4, April 1957, p. 6.

special church but sent his converts to the one they preferred. The Father understood him to say that he did not baptize,[1] but this, being absolutely untrue, must have been a misunderstanding.

His reputation had preceded him and Father Stauffer had heard of the fetishes being destroyed and of the miraculous cures he was effecting. He was even supposed to have raised the dead. His attitude towards the Catholic Church was somewhat in doubt, especially as there was a rumour that after a dispute with Father Fisher at Half Assinie he had cursed him and made him blind. However, in Axim he spoke well of the Fathers, telling people they ought to do much more for their priests. When Father Fisher came to Axim at the end of June, he was perfectly all right, so that rumour was disproved.[2]

At the beginning of his stay in Axim his relations with the priest were friendly enough. The only fetish objects he did not burn were two wooden statuettes, one of which he gave to Father Stauffer and the other to the Methodist Minister.[3] At service on the first Sunday after Harris's arrival in the town, nearly a thousand people tried to crowd into the small Catholic chapel.[4] Nonetheless, Father Stauffer would allow no liberties to be taken with himself and his office. One

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1 Father Stauffer's Journal.

2 Father Stauffer's Journal.

3 Father Stauffer's Journal.

4 Father Stauffer's Journal.

Sunday morning, soon after his arrival, Harris came to the Catholic Church and stood with his cross while the service proceeded. Perhaps he expected to be invited to take part or to speak. When he was not, and the priest began to preach, he left the building and stood outside under a mango tree. Here he heard the church bell of the Wesleyans, so he went to collect his four women and took them to the Methodist Church. Perhaps he was allowed to preach there; Father Stauffer thought so.

Harris began his day at about 5 a.m. when he would appear on the streets driving a flock of sheep.[1] People from outlying villages would be coming in to the market place where he was going to preach, and there he told them that the world was going to be destroyed by fire, together with the people who would not listen to him and those who would not go to church.[2] His wives (or, as the Methodists preferred to think, the "friends, who served him as musicians or as a choir"[3]) shook their calabashes and sang, "Nyame se bra O bra" (God says O come).[4]

The evil-doers, the fetish priests, the witches and medicine-men in the throng were overcome by fear of the power of the Prophet. When he called on those present to come forward for confession[5] and baptism, these evil ones came shaking and trembling. All suppliants

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[1] J.P. Ephson.

[2] J.P. Ephson.

[3] Bruce, op. cit., p. 6.

[4] J.P. Ephson.

[5] Oral evidence of J. Barnes Christian of Axim, April 1964, was that all who came for baptism first made a full confession.

were to hold on to the cross;[1] sometimes as many as six were clutching it at once and he would let others hold his sheepskin or Bible.[2] Usually he began by holding his Bible on the suppliant's head and recited something in a loud voice. Then he dipped his hand in the Holy Water he carried and made a sign of the cross on the man's face, saying, "If you have an evil mind or a devil in you, you know what will happen!"[3] If the person had nothing on his conscience he could go away freely, but if he was attached to magic and witchcraft he became violently possessed. Harris was striking in his patience when some of these people pulled his beard, slapped him, spit on him, and even smashed the cross. When that happened he simply sent for fresh cane and made a new cross.[4] Commonly, when the Bible was touched to the person's head, he would break into a confession of the persons he had killed by witchcraft, and other sins. Then Harris would put the Bible on the head again and ask, "Is that all?" When the answer was "Yes" he was healed, and Harris told him, "You must go take all your medicines and throw them away. If you go back to these medicines <u>You</u> will die!"[5] The fetishes were thrown into the sea or piled on the beach by the Omanhene's palace where the Prophet poured kerosene

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[1] Casely Hayford, <u>William Waddy Harris</u>, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 10, states that this was a symbol of acceptance. On p. 16 he states that people were so anxious to touch it for salvation that it got broken.

[2] J.P. Ephson.

[3] Oral evidence of anonymous old man at Axim, April 1964.

[4] J.P. Ephson.

[5] Anonymous old man, Axim.

on them and burned them.[1]

Once Harris's mission was understood, ordinary men and women thronged from all around, even from Aowin and Wassaw in the interior, bringing their religious objects and medicines in bundles to leave with the Prophet. As many as a thousand new suppliants came every day, and Harris had time neither to eat nor sleep. He would rest for a time in the nearest house, then go to work again.[2]

Casely Hayford wrote a vivid description of a possessed woman being baptized which has been quoted in the publications of others, and deservedly so.

> There has been noticed in the crowd a woman who has attempted several times to touch the cross and held back, as if she would rather not. See! she now gets nearer. At last she has touched it, barely touched it. What is this that is happening, Great God! Is it possible? The woman is torn as if by a violent force. Her body is convulsed. She tears at her breasts. Her eyes literally dart from their sockets. They roll completely up and then completely down. Her hair stands on end. At last she falls prone and rolls about in great agony. Harris calmly goes on baptizing as if nothing is happening. After a while he goes near and utters a strange prayer. Gradually she grows somewhat calmer. She is now on her feet. This strange man again approaches the agonised soul, opens the tattered Bible and holds it before her face, the while uttering a prayer. She seems to be growing calmer now. But again she is seized by - I know not what. She roars like a beast. Her attitude is distinctly defiant. She is, indeed, menacing. Harris breaks into a low laugh, turns away, and continues to baptize as before. He now approaches her for the second time, and once more holds the Bible to her face. She gradually calms down and then comes to herself. She is now as helpless as a babe. She takes her seat with others of like nature and awaits baptism.[3]

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[1] Oral evidence of George A. Ackah at Axim, April 1964, and Father Stauffer's Journal.

[2] Bruce, op. cit., p. 6.

[3] Casely Hayford, William Waddy Harris, op. cit., p. 11.

Harris spent quite a bit of time preaching to the crowds, and now and again would stop and say, "I am receiving messages from God"[1] or "telegrams from Heaven"[2] and would look straight at the sun[3] amidst a silence.

The Prophet spared no pains to touch every element of society in the town. A case illustrating this point was his visit to the Asafo No. 2 Company. This company had just lost their captain, Alicoe, and were praying and mourning his death. Harris was at the palace baptizing, but when he heard of this he rushed to the scene, still holding his cross, and joined in their melancholy dance. Then he told the people, "See, I am a professor, sent by Almighty God. I have come and danced with you. You, after the burial, must come and dance my dance too." Next day, accordingly,[4] all members of No. 2 Company came and were baptized.

A newspaper correspondent who wrote from Axim during Harris's stay there was sure that he deserved every support from the churches. His work was miraculous; he had destroyed most of the "demi-Gods" of Apollonia. "Those who would not hearken to him but keep their fetishes from being burnt run mad on the spot, some dying under his prayers."[5]

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1 J.P. Ephson.

2 Casely Hayford, William Waddy Harris, op. cit., p. 9.

3 J. Barnes Christian.

4 Anonymous old man, Axim. Probably he said "Prophet", not "Professor."

5 The Gold Coast Leader, 4 July 1914.

The correspondent went on to tell of his prayers for thunder being answered, his success at the nearby village of Akinin where "not less than seven-eighths of the inhabitants"[1] were converted after throwing their fetishes into the sea or into dustbins. Whereas the Catholic Church was full to overflowing with new converts, the Wesleyans had none. The reason given by the correspondent was that the Methodists demanded too much in the way of contributions, and the converts could not afford it.[2] Possibly also Butler had not appreciated hearing from Harris, "So you don't take advice of a Prophet. God will show you lesson! You are my servant. You should come and hold the bowl with which I baptize."[3]

Butler's successor, Ernest Bruce, was soon on better terms with the Prophet. He told his congregation, "Whoever believes in Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God and as the only Saviour of the world is my brother and fellow Christian."[4] On a visit to an out-station, Bruce met Harris for the first time.

> When he came to greet me, I demanded to see his Bible. I saw that the book he placed in my hands was the Authorized Version of the Bible, so I warmly welcomed him ... Later we again met at Axim. Prophet Harris arrived one day and asked to inspect our chapel. I asked one of our people to guide him. Some of our other members were angry with me for this.

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1 The Gold Coast Leader, 4 July 1914.

2 Ibid.

3 J.P. Ephson.

4 Bruce, op. cit., p. 6.

When Harris found the church too small for his use, Bruce offered him the school, which was bigger.

Many fetish priests hid in villages near Axim, and it was said that one who had fled ahead of the Prophet as he came through Apollonia bolted early in the morning to evade him again. Even greater miracles were witnessed:

> A man had been converted at Ayinose, the seat of demons, by Harris and within two days [of] conversion after surrendering his fetishes, he is now in possession of Harris Bible and a cross and this fetish priest who has no knowledge of English language can now speak English language very well, abandoning the use of his mother tongue, everyone appreciates the work of Wonderful Harris.[1]

The correspondent mentioned also that the chief fetish priest in Axim had examined Harris and thereupon gave up his fetishes and asked all his subordinates to do the same, rather than go mad.[2]

Harris evidently journeyed out some miles from the town during the weeks he made his headquarters in Axim, for he made return visits to Kikam, Essiama, Assenbah, and Ancobra, where he had to force his way through the multitudes who flocked to see him.[3]

Proof that Harris had miraculous powers was manifested, in the first place, when the sorcerers and others who opposed him were unable to harm him. In Axim, at any rate, and at Kikam, a centre of

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1 The Gold Coast Leader, 4 July 1914.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

witchcraft, when those who intended evil went to his room at night they found him floating up near the ceiling.[1] They fled in terror. Another instance of his powers was that he said one afternoon that he was going to ask God to send rain. He began to pray or recite aloud, the sky became dark, and for thirty minutes it rained.[2] When one of his converts kept his fetishes, a thunderbolt struck the room and destroyed it, while another convert, who turned back to his idols, died. Harris refused him a Christian burial, saying, "God is the Judge."[3]

In Axim, as everywhere, Harris preached strongly against working on Sunday. This was bound to involve him in trouble with the civil authorities wherever he went along the Coast, for when ships hove to outside the breakers all labourers were needed to unload and load her, whatever the day might be. The principal labourers were, of course, Krus, and Harris talked to them a great deal. There are varied accounts of his success with them. It is said that he met with them at the home of their chief, Moses, and that they brought him food in the mornings. As a result of his preaching, they are said to have given up working on Sundays for some years.[4] His chief threat was that God would burn the ships loaded on Sunday, and this was said with particular reference to

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1 J.P. Ephson. According to J. Barnes Christian, he slept suspended between earth and Heaven, where no witchcraft or anything else could harm him.

2 G.A. Ackah.

3 Bruce, op. cit., p. 10.

4 J. Barnes Christian.

the S.S. "Patna" which came in while he was there,[1] but it is not clear whether or not the ship did catch fire. Casely Hayford wrote:

> With outstretched hand toward the sea he points to the boats working on the Lord's Day, and hints at strange things that are about to happen. A ship in the neighbourhood take fire the same day ... it is a curious coincidence.[2]

Another object of Harris's zeal was smoking. He would snatch cigars or cigarettes from men's mouths and toss them to the ground. He opposed wake-keeping as well, and when the wife of Brand the Dispenser died he came in the morning to the house where she lay in state with her gold trinkets on her and her friends around. He ordered the gold taken off, the body put in the coffin, and the burial to take place immediately,[3] at noon. Brand, backed by Butler, refused to obey these orders. Harris in a rage cursed the whole company and withdrew.[4] He must have realized that in ordering burial at such a time he was in effect accusing the woman of witchcraft or of practising sorcery and being the cause of death to her victims, for only those dying while practising some diabolical scheme were buried at midday. The point of this was to ensure that the wicked spirit, which could not come out during daylight, was buried and could no longer harm people, for a spirit which had escaped was even worse than one whose host was living.[5]

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1 J.P. Ephson.

2 Casely Hayford, William Waddy Harris, op. cit., p. 8.

3 Father Stauffer's Journal.

4 J.P. Ephson.

5 Explained by Canon C.H. Elliott, Cape Coast, in letter of 8 November 1965.

Harris also forbade the pouring of libations and sacrifices, but the Omanhene had to continue with these rites as part of his official duty.[1]

Although in the particular case cited above, Harris seems to have seized on a bad moment to lay down his rule, his commands as general pointers towards humane and civilized behaviour were sensible and enlightened. To suggest that funerals should not be long drawn out, extravagant and wasteful, that women should not be ostracized and penalized at a certain time of month, and the desirability of cleanliness and of education, was to throw his strength behind the forces of progress.

The Prophet Harris's visit to Axim cannot be gauged completely in its effects on the Prophet himself and on others without giving adequate attention to the part played by the well-known Fanti politician, Casely Hayford, in influencing the Prophet's ideas and the expectations which Casely Hayford evidently nurtured for some time as to the eventual effect of Harris's work on colonial Africa. Unfortunately, none of Hayford's personal papers relating to the period appears to have survived, so it is in his own published works that we have to look for the evidence.

Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford was one of several gifted sons[2] of

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[1] Tumunli Kwesi.

[2] Rev. J. DeGraft Hayford of Anomabu and his wife, Mary Brew, were the parents of three distinguished men in their generation: Dr. Ernest J. Hayford (1858-1913), Rev. Mark C. Hayford (1864-1935), and J.E. Casely Hayford (1866-1930).

that Rev. Joseph DeGraft Hayford who was prominent in the formation of the Fanti Confederation after 1867.[1] Casely Hayford received the best education available in those days, attending the Wesleyan Boys' High School at Cape Coast and Fourah Bay College, before going on to Peterhouse, Cambridge, and the Inner Temple.[2] He was called to the bar on 17 November 1896 and thereafter practised in several of the Gold Coast towns. During June 1914 he was evidently in his Axim chambers and thus able to observe the whole nature of the Apollonian mass movement.

Up until 1914, and even a few years later, perhaps, he thought politically of a return to the past. This was natural in the son of his father and the nephew of Prince James Hutton Brew of Abura Dunkwa, leader of Fanti nationalism until his death in 1900. From 1916 Hayford was a Member of the Legislative Council of the Gold Coast, which suggests a changed attitude, and certainly by 1920 when he helped form the Congress of British West Africa he was no longer aiming at putting the clock back, but rather at the fullest participation by the Africans in the British institutions imposed upon them and thus the evolution of national independence.[3]

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1 J.B. Danquah in foreward to M.J. Sampson, Gold Coast Men of Affairs, London, 1937, p. 15.

2 Ibid., p. 160.

3 The Congress delegation (of which Casely Hayford was a member) in London in February 1921 wanted a removal of the colour bar in the medical and civil services in West Africa. The Times (London) 19 February 1921.

In 1911 Casely Hayford published Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation, a collection of philosophical and religious speculations held together by a thin plot which reveals a great deal about the author. The hero, Kwamankra, is descended from James Hayford, "a good missionary," who one time served as British resident at Kumasi. Scion of an ancient Fanti house, educated in England, contemptuous of the African semi-educated professional classes who aped the European without understanding him, Kwamankra determines "to devote the rest of his life in bringing back his people to their primitive simplicity and faith."[1] Kwamankra is, in fact, an idealized projection of Casely Hayford, and his declared mission must be assumed to have been the latter's dream around 1910.

In the light of the declarations in Ethiopia Unbound, it seems clear that when in June 1914 the Prophet Harris burst upon his sight, Hayford saw him as an ally. Harris, it seemed, was drawing strength from the depth of the spiritual heritage of Africa, but refining it by a marriage with European religious ideas to form a new and exciting synthesis leading to a new Africa. Although Hayford had always been a Methodist, it was rumoured in Axim that he was baptized by Harris,[2] and he was noticeably active in reconciling the conservative Methodist

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1 J.E. Casely Hayford, Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation, London, 1911, p. 75.

2 J.P. Ephson.

congregation to an acceptance of the Prophet.[1]

The little book he wrote day by day as he observed Harris at work was published in 1915 and gave the world in general its first intimation of marvels afoot in West Africa.[2] The pages are full of emotion, and the emotion is one of awe and admiration of Harris, and what seems to be a confidence that something great was being born in the market place at Axim.

> He is a dynamic force of a rare order. He will move this age in a way few have done.[3]

It could only have been from personal experience that he wrote:

> You come to him with a heart full of bitterness, and when he has finished with you all the bitterness is gone out of your soul.[4]

On the same theme was:

> 'Miracles?' asks one sneeringly. It is not necessary to label the works of William Waddy Harris. But to me it is a greater miracle to drive bitterness out of one's soul than to calm physical agony. It is a miracle of miracles to turn God-ward the heart's aspirations.[5]

Surely the bitterness in his soul was that he felt at seeing incompetent and uninterested colonial officials ruling his people and ignoring the claims to equality and responsibility made by Africans like himself.[6]

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1 J.P. Ephson, and Father Stauffer's Journal.

2 J.E. Casely Hayford, William Waddy Harris, the West African Reformer: The Man and His Message, London, 1915.

3 Ibid., p. 6.

4 Ibid., p. 6.

5 Ibid., pp. 12-3.

6 Casely Hayford, Ethiopia Unbound, op. cit., p. 75 ff. describes such feelings for certain European Government Officers, including a colonial chaplain.

In Ethiopia Unbound he had written of his vision of the unspoilt African leading the world to regeneration. It happened after he had accompanied Dr. Blyden, who happened to be in London at the same time, in looking over an exhibition at the Royal Academy. They came to a painting of a wolf and a lamb living together, and Dr. Blyden said, "And a little child shall lead them--that is Africa."[1] Later, Hayford came to the conclusion that it was not the spoiled imitation European who could carry out this regeneration but rather "The unspoilt son of the tropics, nursed in a tropical atmosphere, favourable to the growth of national life, he it is who may show us the way."[2]

In Harris he seemed to have found his unspoilt son of the tropics.

> William Waddy Harris is strong on truth. All great personalities are strong on truth. They insist upon it. It is that which distinguishes them from the vulgar crowd whose fetish is cant. The soul of man was meant to be transparent. It was also meant to be clean. Convention and cant have covered it with mud. They have darkened it out of recognition. The sin of the age is insincerity.

And with that, Harris gave his great message:

> Man, be yourself. It is no good mocking and deceiving yourself ... truth, like humility, is an essential.[3]

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[1] Casely Hayford, Ethiopia Unbound, op. cit., p. 197.

[2] Ibid., p. 197.

[3] Casely Hayford, William Waddy Harris, op. cit., p. 14. There is an echo here of words Hayford quoted from Dr. Blyden, whose influence over the "thinking youth of the race, lies in the fact that he has revealed in his writings and utterances the true motive power which shall carry the race on from victory unto victory ... in one word 'Man, know thyself.'" This is found in Hayford's introduction to Blyden's West Africa Before Europe, op. cit., p. iii.

Then, of Harris's spiritual power he wrote:

> The soul of William Waddy Harris moves in the higher plane[1] ... It seems as if God made the soul of Harris a soul of fire. You cannot be in his presence for long without realising that you are in contact with a great personality. He began as a reformer in the state. He ended as a reformer in the spiritual realm.[2]

No longer advocating political rebellion against the Liberian authorities, Harris still used the term "rebellion" constantly, and he denounced authorities and powers without fear when they forced men to commit sins against God's Law, such as working on the Sabbath.[3] His outspokenness was a sign not only of his courage but of his childlike simplicity.

> William Waddy Harris is a simple man. He wears a loose calico gown with a black tape thrown over and a rough woven cloth of the same material round his neck. He goes barefoot. He has tramped many a weary mile in search of souls. Humanity is fine when it is simple. It is simple when it is young. It is simple also in old age. Those whom the gods would specially bless they bring to a ripe old age, so that they may get a touch of simplicity before the last. William Waddy Harris is neither a child, nor a man bowed down in years. But he is a simple man. This, too, is of God. For God has humbled him.[4]

Casely Hayford was impressed too by the humility Harris so often expressed.

> He says of the Christ that he took the form of a babe in order that by his helplessness he might indicate the true nature of humility. He reminds you that the Kroo man is the scavenger of

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1 Casely Hayford, William Waddy Harris, op.cit., p. 6.

2 Ibid., p. 7.

3 Ibid., p. 8.

4 Ibid., p. 15.

> the world ... Mammon has used the Kroo man all these years. And now God has need of him ... God is using him now in the person of William Waddy Harris.[1]

If we based our final verdict on the writings of Casely Hayford we should be satisfied that the relation between the two men was that of a sophisticated man of the world sitting at the feet of an inspired messenger whose holy simplicity overwhelmed all base nature. The truth is not as straightforward as that. Casely Hayford not only learned from Harris but his dialogue with him definitely turned the Prophet's mind into new channels. Even the revelations he received from Gabriel during his time at Axim were affected by outside suggestion. Father Stauffer, the missionary who had no cause to love Hayford, wrote:

> The prophet, left to himself, would have done a lot of good. He did some good but would have done a lot more if some people had not been taking upon themselves the role of the Angel towards him.[2]

He gives an example. A week or two after Harris's arrival in town Casely Hayford told him people could not understand why the Roman priest and the Wesleyan Reverend had not yet come to pay their respects to him who had brought so many converts to their churches. Harris replied, "You have nothing to tell me. It is the Angel Gabriel alone who does command me." That night the Angel spoke and next day, said Father Stauffer, Harris talked and acted "according to the suggestions of those black angels."

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1 Casely Hayford, William Waddy Harris, op. cit., p. 9.

2 Father Stauffer's Journal.

In the market place he spoke of the priest and the minister and said, "You will see what will happen if they do not come and do me homage." Bruce (according to the Father) sent the Prophet a sack of rice, several fowls, and an invitation to dinner. Father Stauffer contented himself with sending the message that he was willing to get the Prophet free quarters and free food from the Government, i.e., have him put in prison.[1] He had no further trouble until shortly before the Prophet turned his back on Axim, and this too involved Casely Hayford.

There was in Axim a group of young Fantis and mulattoes of somewhat superior education employed in the firms or in business of some sort for themselves. Some of these men at first watched Harris from a distance mockingly, but later met at the house where Harris had been lodged (by the Omanhene) and conversed rather banteringly, from their superior position, with the Prophet. These were the "black angels" of Father Stauffer. Casely Hayford was the senior (then aged about 48, not far short of Harris himself) and much the most important of the group. The others included George Hutchful (a husband of Hayford's niece), Charles Grant (whose brother George was the most important native capitalist in the area), Ankuman Yanney, W.L. Phillips, and two brothers, E.B. Ephson and J.P. Ephson, from Elmina. Harris spoke freely to these men in effective English which verged on the "pidgin" type, though at times he rose above that.[2]

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[1] Father Stauffer's Journal.

[2] J.P. Ephson.

An example of their ribald approach was when they asked Harris how it was that he who had come to Axim with two wives now had the company of five--how could he have more than one?

> 'There's no harm in that!' he cried, 'unless you take her to the altar. Even if you have a lawfully (i.e., church) married wife I will show you the way out of it. Tell her, I have seen this woman and I wish to marry her. If she refuses to agree, call a woman messenger to deliver exactly the same message. If she refuses again, call a second messenger and send the message again. Then it doesn't matter what she says, because you have told her in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.'[1]

Another version of this is that according to Father Stauffer, Harris had arrived with one wife but his "black angels" had put it to him that they, being "big men," were surely not bound to one wife as poor men were. That was God's law for the white man, but did it apply to the black? Harris assured them that he could say nothing about it, the Angel would speak. That night came the revelation and next day it was publicly preached: "God did not intend to make the same law for black and white people. Blacks could take as many wives as they could look after."[2] The Prophet then took several women as his wives, women, including Grace Thannie,[3] who were fetish priestesses won over by him. Whichever version of the story is more accurate, it is certainly true that henceforth Harris did not preach against polygamy.

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[1] J.P. Ephson.

[2] Father Stauffer's Journal. He was wrong in saying Harris came with one woman; he came with two, and while he may have added three, it seems that only Grace Thannie joined him permanently.

[3] Grace Thannie is honoured today as foundress of the Church of the Twelve Apostles (see below Chapter V). She had been a fetish priestess at Kristan.Eikwe.

Because of the scarcity of food due to the congestion of people at Axim, and the neglected farms,[1] increasing sanitary difficulties, and the impossibility of having ships loaded on Sunday, the authorities were anxious to have Harris move on. The District Commissioner called him to him and reprimanded him strongly. Harris, it is said, bore himself confidently, being sure of his authority from God and the power it gave him, and said, "Ha! You are not pleased. Well, I leave Axim town and you will see." So on a Sunday morning he and his wives started off for Sekondi.[2] When the chiefs and people at Axim understood what was afoot, they brought him back, and for another fortnight he continued in the town.

Harris had been saying that he would go on to Sekondi and then "through the instrumentality of the railway" to Kumasi.[3] Explanations as to why he turned back at this point are various. Hayford wrote of him as saying, "I received a message that I must leave this place. I must turn back. I am not to go forward. If I go to Seccondee, the people there will not hear." He went on to say that the white people there would not listen to him and would work on Sunday. Therefore, God

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[1] J.P. Ephson.

[2] Father Stauffer's Journal. According to the Gold Coast Leader, 15 October 1914, it was Harris who had taken the initiative by calling on the District Commissioner to ask him to prohibit the Sunday working of steamers. It was on his refusal that Harris decided to leave.

[3] J.P. Ephson.

would plague them, white and black, until they were ready to listen. But it was not he, Harris, who would preach to them.[1]

Father Stauffer tells a rather different story, one in which he plays a leading role. Although, he says, the Administration wished Harris would go away, they did not know how to effect his departure quietly. It was "the black angels" who hastened his retreat, though that was not their intent. It hurt this group that Harris was welcome only in the Methodist Church. They asked him whether he was afraid of the Father. That night the Archangel spoke again, and next morning, Saturday, 25 July 1914, "the black cherubs" came to announce to the Father that Harris would be coming next morning to preach in his church. Friends had already told Father Stauffer of the message being brought, and he refused to receive the delegation. They refused to leave, however, and at last he came out on the raised veranda of the Mission House where Casely Hayford, as spokesman, addressed him. The African lawyer opened fire first. "What do you think of the Prophet?" Father Stauffer replied that Harris had at first done a lot of good and had brought many people to church but now, misled by "some of you," he was doing wrong, teaching polygamy and inciting to revolt. Hayford abruptly delivered his message: "The Prophet is coming to preach in your church tomorrow!" Stauffer answered: "How dare you, a lawyer, educated in Europe, the brother of

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[1] Casely Hayford, William Waddy Harris, op. cit., p. 9.

a Reverend, bring me such a message that a Krooman is going to preach in the Catholic Church when you know that nobody who is neither bishop nor priest, not even the Governor, is allowed to preach in a Catholic Church!"

Half an hour later the Prophet himself appeared on the veranda with a crowd of people. He told the priest: "I tell you, you have to send away all the people who I brought to you. I am going to make my own church." "There are the stairs," said Father Stauffer, gesturing with his hand. It took Harris a moment to understand his meaning, then, in great haste, he went, and according to the priest, left the town and headed back to the Ivory Coast.[1] If true, it indicates that Harris was baffled by a self-assurance which, because it would not bow before him, he had no way of overcoming as he had with most of the native men of power who opposed him.

Before the Prophet left Axim he pronounced a curse on the Catholic Church and those who worshipped there, incited perhaps by some of the Protestants. The next morning the new converts, fearful of death, stayed away from Mass. At the service Father Stauffer asked, "Who is the Prophet Harris?" and gave this answer, "He is a liar." He pointed out that whereas Father Fisher had been said to be stricken with blindness, he had since been seen in Axim perfectly healthy, and

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[1] Father Stauffer's Journal.

whereas Harris had at first spoken highly of the Catholic Church, he now said the contrary. "Let everyone come to church without fear," said the Father, "they will not die." That Sunday there was a large Catholic funeral and the same night a candlelight procession through the streets. There were no deaths and on the next Sunday attendance was good again.

Harris himself did not remain consistent. A few days after leaving Axim he was again, at Essiama, asked to curse the local Catholic Church and said, "The Father has done right. I am a prophet. I have to preach in the streets, not in the churches. It is Hayford--Hayford who has deceived me. Also the Catholics know the cross, they serve Christ; the Wesleyans do not know the cross, they do not know Christ."[1] This quotation may have been a product of wishful thinking by Father Stauffer's informant, or it may have been well-founded, for Harris was capable of sudden changes of mood which led him to be prudent in speech at times, as well as unnecessarily provocative.

After Harris went away from Axim fear kept his converts obedient to his teachings and as he had warned that death would overtake those who broke his laws, the deaths which did occur were looked upon as indicative of guilt. A case in point was the woman described by the news correspondent thus:

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[1] Father Stauffer's Journal.

> A certain woman who committed immorality after holding Professor Harris' Cross died last week and confessed on her dying bed the cause of her death. This will be a check to our female sex in Apollonia and other places.[1]

When leaving Harris warned the Omanhene: "Your people I have healed, if they return to bad medicine, will die a foolish death--because in about four years a big sickness will come to the world."[2] Perhaps the last phrase was added after the flu epidemic of 1918.

On his way back he met many people who were pursuing him from the Ivory Coast, including many of the Sanwi Agnis. They had brought money for him, but he said he had enough to see him back to Liberia and refused it.[3] He also refused a proffered bag of rice.

The belated and only praise the Prophet received from the Gold Coast Administration was in connection with its attempts to introduce town planning and public cleanliness in the towns along the shore. The District Commissioner wrote:

> The sanitation of the villages between Half Assinie and Ancobra Mouth improved to a truly amazing degree during 1914. This is largely the work of the 'prophet' as he was called.

After mentioning that he baptized and persuaded people to give up their "jujus" and go to church, the report concluded: "He impressed upon them also that next to Godliness is cleanliness."[4]

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1 The Gold Coast Leader, 12 September 1914.

2 Anonymous old man, Axim.

3 Oral evidence of Daniel Aka Cablan, son of a former King of Sanwi, at Krinjabo, August 1964.

4 Axim Record Book.

The Provincial Commissioner, in a letter some nine months after Harris had withdrawn, wrote:

> Apollonia before Harris [sic] visit was steeped in fetishism and the towns and villages were in a most unsanitary condition. All this has now been changed, places of worship and schools are to be found in every village, and the villages and towns are being remodelled on sanitary lines.[1]

Behind him, as he quit Apollonia, Harris left the two churches trying to cope with thousands[2] of former fetish practitioners battering their doors in an effort to become full-fledged Christians and thus be safe from the malevolent spirits Harris had driven away. The churches, for the most part, failed, but that is another chapter.

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[1] Accra, Conf. 830/407/D, Commissioner, Western Province (John Maxwell) to District Commissioner, Sefwi, 6 April 1915. Also in his covering letter of 29 May 1916 to Quarterly Report for Axim District.

[2] Armstrong, op. cit., p. 38, speaks of 8,000 people trying to join the Methodist Church.

CHAPTER IV

THE SECOND PASSAGE OF HARRIS THROUGH THE IVORY COAST

While Harris was occupied in the Gold Coast, his message was being disseminated in the Ivory Coast by Brown, Goodman, and others. A movement of villagers towards Lahou set in, but it must have been very gradual, for it was not until July that the Chef de Poste at Dabou reported that a great number of Alladians, mostly chiefs and elders, had been travelling to a spot near Fresco to see a "messenger of God" entrusted with a new religion for them.[1] Such a messenger at this date can only have been one of the clerks at Ebonou, probably Brown. The pilgrims, returning home, burned their fetishes and constructed huts for prayer.

As the rumours of Harris's greatness in the Gold Coast trickled back to reinforce the belief in his miraculous achievements at Ebonou, Lozoua, along the Alladian Coast, and at Grand Bassam, the indifference of many who had met or heard of the Prophet turned to keen interest. Oral tradition at Addah, an important Alladian village midway between Grand Lahou and Jacqueville, recounts that Harris on his first passage stayed one night there. During the evening he called the old men together and told them that the fetishes they feared were not gods; they should burn them and go to Brown at Ebonou to be baptized. The old men were

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[1] Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, July 1914.

not convinced so he simply said, "Well, I am going on my way. There is no pressure on you, but your hearts will lead you to do what I have said."[1]

After he had gone, these "chefs de famille" discussed what he had said among themselves and with their wives and children, and reflected. It was true, they decided, and bit by bit, household by household, they began to burn their fetishes and make their way to Brown at Ebonou. At that time, deputations from various villages were doing the same, and found not only Brown but, closer at hand, his deputy at Grand Lahou. This man was known to them simply as "Papa." It is certain that many of the thousands said to have been baptized at Lahou by Harris were actually baptized by Brown and "Papa."

When Victor Nivri, the Chef de Canton, a Catholic, saw the mobs of Alladians, Adjoukrous, and Ebriés passing through Addah en route to Lahou, he decided, after consulting his elders, to go and get the power necessary to baptize people himself. He was carried by hammock to Grand Lahou, where "Papa" regretted that he had no authority to delegate power. Nivri went on to Brown, who received him and instructed him for two weeks and then gave him full authority to baptize.[2]

From that time Addah became a centre for pilgrimage, and Nivri

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[1] Oral evidence of four old men at Methodist Church, Addah, August 1963.

[2] Old men at Addah. Nivri himself refused to discuss his role, although still a hale and hearty man.

even made trips to other villages to administer the rite.[1] Some of the people he baptized came from Adjué, another large Alladian village further east. Harris, on his first passage, had spent one night here, at the house of Njako the Chief. Adjué had a unique fetish object (probably a large metal cylinder) which had been bought from the English traders and enshrined under the name of Kragbin N'Je, complete with a Chief Priest and assistants. This Priest and other elders were summoned to meet Harris. When they heard from him that God, the Creator, did not like fetishes to be worshipped, they scorned his message and rejected him as a madman. They told him that they were not able to drive the fetish spirits away (evidently, it had not been rumoured among them at this time that Harris had the power to do that himself) and the Prophet, enraged, stalked from the village and continued eastwards. No voice was raised in his support. The feticheurs, however, changed their minds. A whirlwind blew through the town the same afternoon and while it did not do much damage (rumour much exaggerated its effect, as it was reported in other places) it was sufficiently obvious as a sign to lead to second thoughts about Harris. From that time on, they began to burn their fetish objects and went to Lahou or, later, to Addah, to be baptized.[2]

At some time after Nivri took up the work, a large number of the inhabitants of Mopoyeme, a sizable town of Adjoukrous on the inner

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1 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, November 1914.

2 Oral evidence of old men of the Methodist Church, Adjué, August 1963.

side of the lagoon, near Dabou, were baptized by him. Their experience was typical of many from across the lagoon. The news had reached them that God had sent someone to "baptize" all who agreed to burn the fetishes and to cease to worship the fetish spirits. The "baptism" signified something new, something important, that they had never known of before. They sent six young persons to Lahou to investigate. There they found only "Papa," a Sierra Leonean, who baptized them and gave them Harris's commands. On their return, they persuaded the rest of the villagers to burn their fetishes and seek baptism. The old Priest of the village was dead and they had not chosen a new guardian for the village shrine from among the eligible old men, so they burned its contents along with their own fetish objects and set out by canoe for Addah, which was closer than Lahou.

On arrival at the village they went directly to Victor Nivri's house. He asked why they had come. They said they had heard that he would baptize them, and that they wished to worship God. He went in and got his Bible and when he was sure that they had burned their fetishes, he read to them from it and told them what they must do to merit admittance to Heaven. He then dismissed them for that day. Next morning, when the church bell had sounded, the men and women seated themselves, in separate groups, in the village square. Nivri announced that it was time for the baptism; if they were attached to the Devil[1]

[1] Nivri may have been familiar with the concept of a "Devil" from his school-days with the Fathers at Jacqueville, but the Adjoukrous cannot have understood his question, if phrased in those words.

they must break with him now! If they had not burned their fetishes they must do so before they entered their homes again. Nivri was dressed like Harris for the ceremony in a white robe with a white turban, and he carried a large dish of water and a cross of sticks. There were people from many villages there, and he baptized each in the name of the Trinity. Some, he thought as he came to them, were attracted to the Devil and he made the sign of the cross before their eyes. People who were attached to witchcraft cried out in agitation. Two of the villagers were especially agitated; a man thrashed his head and limbs about and a woman completely lost control of her excretory functions and was a pitiful sight.

When the group from Mopoyeme returned home, they followed Nivri's instructions and built a church for prayer, looking for guidance to a young man, Moise Lat, who had been appointed Predicateur or Preacher when he visited Lahou. He turned out to be so lacking in initiative that they replaced him by Djedjre who had also gone to Lahou and who, furthermore, spoke some English. Lat was given another official post, that of bell-ringer.[1]

In August, when the Chef de Poste from Dabou toured the coastal areas of his district, he found fetishes burnt, churches built, and the people everywhere practising what he called "Protestantism." He noticed two excellent effects of this sudden conversion: that since the destruction of the fetishes, a great many young men had returned to the

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[1] Oral evidence of old men at Mopoyeme, August 1964.

villages they had left because they were afraid of being poisoned, and every day, save Sunday, was devoted to labour.[1] At Jacqueville the officer found, in mid-August, many Abidjis and Adjoukrous. He evidently did not connect them with the new faith, and ordered them home, warning them not to return without passes.

During August 1914, while war clouds gathered over Europe and all Frenchmen in the colony, even the missionaries, considered how mobilization would affect them, trade in the Ivory Coast came almost to a standstill. It was not the European situation which directly caused this, but the fact that the firms were refusing to accept manillas as a medium of exchange, while the producers felt they were not being offered a fair price for their produce and held it back. The foreign peddlers, who usually acted as middlemen, had drifted away. From the Administration's point of view, this was one good result.

The Chef de Poste at Dabou guarded against a new kind of exploitation by instructing each village that their pastor must be presented to him before installation.[2] During September the mainland villages of the Adjoukrous and Abidjis were discovered to be equally given over to the new faith. They were no longer observing the taboos which prevented them from labouring a full six days. During September "a provocative pastor," presumably "Sam," moved from Lahou to Jacqueville

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1 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, August 1914.

2 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, August 1914.

where he baptized numerous Alladians, then came to Bouboury, where many Adjoukrous went to him. The Chef de Poste understood that the leading figures of Dêbrimou and Orbaff had sent an invitation to the great pastor at Lahou, "Jesus Christ," and the Chief of Dêbrimou, Albert Katakre, said he would be with them in the early part of October. Since the disciple who came was universally known as "Papa," it would seem that the officer had badly misunderstood the Chief, as well as the nature of Papa's teaching. He did know that the pseudo-Jesus Christ forbade the drinking of too much alcohol, and recommended work for six days and rest on Sunday, and since these teachings were excellent, he would not interfere with the man but would watch him discreetly.[1]

Harris, who probably knew nothing of what had been happening so far behind him, had by this time returned and taken up his work at Bingerville, under the eye of Governor Angoulvant. He had reappeared in August and met with enthusiastic receptions at the places where formerly people had been indifferent. Cêcaldi, the Administrateur at Bassam, had died, as noted above, a few days after Harris had left the town and this was attributed to the Prophet's powers. He was said to have predicted it[2] and thereby brought it about, through the power of his God. Moreover, accounts of his success in the Gold Coast and the marvels he accomplished there had been reported and exaggerated. Many

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1 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, September 1914.

2 Hartz, op. cit., p. 120.

Apollonians and Agnis had pursued him there; when he returned to Assinie the inhabitants of the inland parts of the Cercle came down en masse, even the notables from Krinjabo, the Sanwi capital. With them was John Swatson, the Methodist agent at Aboisso upon whom Harris laid hands and sanctified as Bishop of Sanwi.[1] Swatson was to carry on the evangelization of the hinterland, for Harris was steadfast in his intention to stay close to the coast and would not even go up to visit Krinjabo or Aboisso.

At Assinie he met a delegation from Bonoua, the chief centre of the Abouré-Akapless tribe which lived inland from the coast along the lower reaches of the Comoé River. The four men begged Harris in the name of their chief, Anoh Adouké, to come and destroy their fetishes. He promised to visit Bonoua when he had finished at Assinie. Perhaps he forgot, or followed a sudden whim, as he was prone to do, for instead of going to Bonoua, he went to Bassam.[2] There, enthusiastic throngs demanded that he put on their heads the water of God that he carried with him.[3]

Bingerville

At Bingerville Governor Angoulvant learned with interest of the return of the Prophet, known to him by rumour. At his command

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1 This title is first mentioned by Marty, op. cit., p. 17. In a conversation with Father Harrington in Liberia in 1917, Harris admitted consecrating Swatson and cited St. Paul as his example. Harrington, op. cit., p. 160.

2 Oral evidence of Jean Ekra, Chef d'Église, Bonoua, July 1963.

3 Benoit's Report.

Harris was brought to his palace, and after a meeting of the two men the Governor asked the acting Superior of the Catholic Mission, Father Gorju, to talk to him. Although Father Gorju later attacked Harris with immoderate venom, the Prophet's charm made a favourable impression on them at their meetings, and as Harris attended mass[1] and encouraged his converts to do the same, the Church saw no reason to condemn him. Angoulvant went further and publicly expressed his approval of the Prophet's teachings when he met the indigenous population during tours of inspection, for

> Seeing that he preached obedience to the Administration's authority, forbade the misuse of alcohol and converted the feticheurs who had been, for a long time, the causes of revolt against the French, the Government of the Ivory Coast judged his presence as being of great service to all.[2]

Years later, when the Governor was asked about Harris, he remembered him as a hypnotist whose powers were used for purposes beyond reproach and whose teachings offended the Administration in no way.[3]

The Chef de Poste at Abidjan concurred in the approval of Harris's teachings, though he did not believe that Harris's role as "prophet" was understood in more than a confused way. They acclaimed him largely "because he brought a new religion," a shrewd observation on the officer's part. Converts informed him that they were commanded

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1 Hartz, op. cit., p. 123.

2 Amon-d'Aby, op. cit., p. 152.

3 Bianquis, op. cit., p. 11.

to live on good terms with the white men (presumably, the Administration was what was meant), to earn their living by six days of hard work followed by a Sunday consecrated to prayers and complete rest. The officials were happiest about the destruction of the fetishes. The Chef de Poste wrote, "The Administration can only rejoice about it provided that the propagation of this religion ... works for the good of civilization."[1]

Oral tradition among the Harris converts remembers his weeks spent in the vicinity of Bingerville as a time of marvels. Housed by Kofi Justin, an official interpreter, he lived in the shadow of the gubernatorial palace and there summoned first the townspeople. They were hostile; some of them had come intending to kill him (supernaturally, one presumes) and asked him at once, "You, with what power and for what reason do you come here?" Harris felt that only a miracle would convince them that he had power, so he and the women sang a hymn, then he thrust his staff up towards the sky, pointing to the sun. The sun whirled about in a circle, and then a little black cloud grew overhead and from it rain fell on the wicked people. It did not rain on the good people standing beside him. When the rain had stopped, Harris said, "What do you want now?" "To be baptized," they answered. Harris replied, "I have baptized you with the rain,"[2] which would appear to be disappointing

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[1] Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Abidjan Rural, September 1914.

[2] Abraham Nandjui.

to the people who had intended him no harm. Despite that touch to heighten the mystery, it seems likely that the rain fell on everyone and that all were considered baptized together.

Another story, possibly a different version of this, is told about the village of Akue Sautê, near Bingerville, which was rejecting Harris's baptism. He set out to visit them as soon as he heard of the villagers' opposition. When they refused to prepare for baptism, he called a torrential rainfall by pointing his staff at the sun. Then they repented of their bad conduct and told him so. With a gesture of his staff in the opposite direction, Harris brought the shower to an end, made the sun shine warmly, and went ahead baptizing the people in his normal way.

It is an interesting corroboration of Harris's reputation as a rain-maker that he cited it as proof of his prophetic vocation when talking to Father Gorju, though he placed it second (as Casely Hayford would have done) to his power to effect changes in the lives of the crowds who surrounded him and heard him preaching.[1]

He told the Father a number of things about his life in a way which shows that the Prophet controlled the Man in him. When he received his call, he said, he was told that he must give up his wife as a sacrifice; thus he rationalized her death which his children knew was caused by her grief when she realized that he had become "mad" in

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[1] Hartz, op. cit., p. 121.

prison.[1] He told him that he was the Prophet come to announce the thousand years of peace spoken of by St. John in the 20th chapter of Revelation. Strangely, he is also quoted as having said that he was a Methodist. Possibly he had reverted to the faith of his childhood, but it seems more likely that he was misunderstood. "Protestant Episcopal" would have been a title meaningless to Father Gorju; "Protestant" would suggest Wesleyan Methodist, as this body was known to him.

The Superior of the Mission thought it was wrong of Harris to baptize (Father Gorju later wrote that the fact that this baptism was probably valid, at least in form, was "not the least of our worries"[2]). Harris replied that Christ had instructed him to baptize as a preservation against the influence of the fetishes the people had abandoned. "This preservative, it is the water and the influence which the touching of my cross exerts upon them."[3] Despite their approval of some of his results (not least of these the crowds now coming to church) the Fathers finally asked Harris to baptize no more. His answer was to bring some hundreds of people to the Mission for the Fathers to baptize. The latter said that instruction had to be given first, so as to have souls capable of grasping the virtue of baptism.[4] Harris replied, "God will do that."

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1 Benoit's Report.

2 Gorju as quoted in Bianquis, op. cit., p. 9.

3 Hartz, op. cit., p. 122.

4 Ibid., p. 123.

Although Harris was willing to co-operate with the Catholic Mission, it was not his intention or perhaps in his power to force his converts to become Catholics against their will. About two kilometres from Bingerville was a village, Adjamé, which was typical in being hesitant about coming to Harris until the Chief Fetish Priest and six others went and were baptized. The first reaction of the rest of the villagers was to try to kill the defaulters by sorcery, but when they failed, they all came to be baptized. Shortly after, Harris appeared in the centre of the village with a Catholic Father and told the people they must build a church in which to worship. The Priest said nothing, but the people suspected that he intended to take charge of the church. The missionaries had come to Adjamé before, telling the inhabitants to burn their fetishes, but when they had done so there were deaths, so they no longer trusted the power of the Fathers and their God.

They said to Harris, "You, perhaps, are sent by God and we want to listen to you alone--don't turn us over to these people!" Harris heard them out sympathetically and promised that other white men, not the Fathers, would come to teach them about God. A few days later he asked a Fanti trader at Aboubou, whom the Ebriés knew as "Krak," to come and teach the village to know God. Krak first showed Harris his Bible. Harris approved it and told the villagers, "The white men who are coming will bring this sort of Bible."[1] Then he ordered Krak to teach them some new

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[1] This would be the English "King James Version" and in so far as his converts believed that this version alone was valid, they would refuse the ministrations of the Catholic Fathers.

songs, and told them that whereas formerly they had danced in honour of the fetishes and sung praises to them, now they were to dance and sing praises to God. Krak then taught them Christian hymns and they danced to them.[1]

The man who became Chef d'Église (Preacher) of the new church was the same chief priest who had led the first group to Bingerville. It becomes obvious from this account that when the leading intercessors with the spirits had publicly lost faith in the powers of those spirits, then the bulk of the people, who made no special claim to any intimacy with the spirit world, would find conformity with the new faith the path of least resistance.

During the weeks Harris spent at Bingerville, crowds of people came not only from the immediate vicinity but from far inland as the rumour of his power spread; many of them believed that the Government was particularly anxious to have them come to Harris, and in the main, this was true.

As the news of the burning of fetish objects by Harris and his disciples spread during the third quarter of 1914, the devotees of the spirits began to lose confidence in them. The story became current that the spirits were saying to their initiates that they were retiring to a distant place, ceding their territory to the new power which was coming. They were also reported as saying that they had been judged and

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[1] Oral evidence of Amos Ahin, Eugene Leloux, Emmanuel Gbedje, Alfred Danho, and Paul Kolan, old men in the Methodist Church at Adjamé-Bingerville, August 1963.

and were to be punished. Since the spirits had thus abandoned their position, people did not find it risky to burn the objects associated with them. The Ebriés, for example, understood that henceforth the one great God, Attoutou Yankan (or Attoutou Yankan-Yangoblessoué) would himself protect them from sickness and make them rich and numerous, though previously they had never visualized him as being concerned with the cares and joys of their little lives.[1]

The baptism at Bingerville was given to groups of ten, all holding Harris's cross at once. He spoke the words of the baptism in English and they were translated as he did so, while he made the sign of the cross in water on their foreheads and touched their heads with his Bible. It was these two things which made some people fall into convulsions. After each group was baptized, while a new group was coming forward, Harris and the three women sang hymns and shook their calabashes.

Harris is said to have been very agitated at such gatherings. His movements were often fast and he shouted loudly when he was displeased. Each day when all had been baptized he told them that his baptism rested on their repentance (presumably, this meant it protected them only so long as they did not fall back into the sin of fetish worship), and that after him would come learned people[2] to teach them about God and His works, and how to gain salvation. In the meantime, they were to build churches to honour the Eternal there.[3]

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1 Oral evidence of Mathieu Adobi at Adjamé-Abidjan, August 1964.

2 These people were not always described or at least remembered as being white.

3 Mathieu Adobi.

Bonoua

At some time in the autumn of 1914 Harris made a notable impact on the Abouré people who lived on the Comoé River east of Bassam. This group had been conquered in October and November 1893, when the French, after suffering many casualties, had brought up artillery.[1] The Chief, Ahui Nogbou, and his deputy at Bonoua, Amangoua, were exiled to Gabon.[2] At the beginning of 1898 the first two Catholic missionaries arrived to open a school[3] and in time made a few converts.

When, at the end of 1903, a new god, Mando, had been enthusiastically adopted throughout the southern part of the Ivory Coast, Bonoua too had built a temple for him and asked his favours by gifts of gold dust. The temple consisted of a small hut in the middle of which, on a raised mound of earth, sat a vase full of stagnant water covered by an upturned calabash. It was believed that death would strike down anyone who dared touch it, and the elders of the village, under one chosen as chief priest, constituted themselves Mando's guardians.[4]

Father Gorju later reported the cult's technique:

> Soon the number of deaths in the village multiplied in a prodigious fashion. Each death was solemnly announced by a circle of magistrates as a manifestation of Mando's anger, and the family of the defunct was, in consequence, to make amends in

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1 Gorju, La Côte d'Ivoire, op. cit., p. 45.

2 Jean Ekra.

3 Gorju, La Côte d'Ivoire, op. cit., p. 49.

4 Ibid., p. 137.

> proportion to their fortune. It was not long before it was clear that the deaths showed all the characteristics of poisoning, and that the victims were always members of the richest families or young men who, by their work, had amassed some savings. At last the secret wheels putting the new divinity in motion were understood; the terror and indignation were unbounded when, during May (1904), there were more than a hundred deaths - but such was the domination of superstition on these poor men that they dared not communicate their conclusions except tremblingly in secret.[1]

Father Garcia of the Mission one day walked in front of Mando's temple and saw there, lying on a mat in front of the door, a young man who had been baptized a few years before. He explained to the angry priest that he had been attacked by a grave illness and since ordinary remedies did no good, had been carried there by relatives in an effort to beg the fetish to cut short his anger. Father Garcia strode towards the hut, ignoring the frightened cries of the people prostrated around, lifted off the cover, stirred the sacred water with the tip of his machete, and sprinkled it on the attendants, crying, "Look here, here it is, your Mando; see his power!"[2] Everyone ran away, expecting that heaven would strike the blasphemer down. As he returned to the Mission compound, Father Garcia found the streets deserted and closed doors everywhere.

Mando's guardians met together and a friendly elder ran to urge the Father to flee for his life, but he refused. The elders finally appeared in a group, but as they were unwilling to use violence

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1 Gorju, La Côte d'Ivoire, op. cit., p. 138.

2 Ibid., p. 139.

against him lest the French authorities retaliated in kind, they merely demanded that he pay a heavy fine. The Father refused and dismissed them without ceremony. On their heels came a large group of young men who felt that in Father Garcia they had found a champion and who had decided to invite him to be their chief in a new village they would build some distance away, out of reach of the insatiable appetite of Mando. This threat brought the older men to their senses and at a great palaver a compromise was worked out whereby Mando's cupidity was much reduced and fear of him diminished.[1]

Despite these events, the Catholic missionaries had made very few converts to the Christian faith by August 1914, when Harris was invited to come. When he did not appear, a group was sent to bring him.

One of the five men who went to find him, Ahoulon Ekra Jean, has provided a vivid picture of the Prophet's mode of proceeding. Apparently more than a month had elapsed since Harris had promised to come to Bonoua, but he had probably been carried by canoe to Bassam; at any rate, he had gone there and been at work ever since. The delegation found Harris at Bassam on a Friday; he agreed to come with them by canoe up the Comoé on the Sunday. On Sunday morning, unfortunately, Harris was indignant at discovering that the men were working at the wharf as if it were a week day and he went to the Commandant to protest. When the Commandant ignored him, he grew so angry that he decided to go

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[1] Gorju, La Côte d'Ivoire, op. cit., p. 140.

home, and so took his three women and went along the shore. The Bonoua men were determined not to let him slip away and followed him at a distance. At Port-Bouët (about 25 km. beyond Bassam) Harris was inspired to turn back and so met the Bonoua contingent. Since it was dusk, they all sought shelter in a nearby hamlet for that night.

By 10 o'clock in the morning they were back in Bassam, having baptized a large group en route, and Harris insisted upon again going to the Commandant and again the result was that he flew into a passion and decided that he would return to the Gold Coast. Two of the Bonoua men set out for home to tell the chief that Harris was escaping them again. They stopped at Yaou, near Bonoua, and the chief there immediately sent a delegation to pursue the Prophet. From Bonoua a second important embassy was sent and caught Harris at an encampment called Hoflobou on the seashore. They persuaded him that he must come to Bonoua by telling him of a wizard named Abbi who said he could kill Harris by giving him some powdered tobacco. Harris could not resist the challenge.

The return to Bonoua led them over the Kodjoboué Lagoon, which had three taboos attached to it. Those crossing dared not say the name of a one-eyed man, or of an albino, and a woman in her period could not cross. The Bonoua men suggested that Harris baptize the lagoon and dissolve these restrictions. He did so; he propelled himself over the water, lifted his staff and made a long prayer, and when he had finished a torrential rain fell, though the Prophet was still in the sunlight.

They moved on to Bonoua, where they found that the fetícheur Abbi had vanished.[1]

Gaston Joseph, writing close to the event, described the wizard as vanquished only after a public confrontation. According to his account, the fetish priest, Labri (from Abidji country), declared that Harris (Latabou) could do nothing against his fetish, and even accepted two thousand francs from a group of villagers who wanted him to prevent Harris from coming. Evidently the village was split in its attitude to fetishes, as in 1904. When Harris did arrive, he found the fetícheur dancing and gesticulating in front of the fetish hut, but on seeing Harris, his courage failed and he fled into the bush. The people gathered together, the fetishes were burned, and all, including a wife and nephew of the fetícheur, were baptized.[2]

Those who were sick were cured on touching the cross. After baptizing them, Harris told the villagers that they should go either to the Protestant or to the Catholic Church. He said that messengers and evangelists would come to encourage the newly-baptized and make them familiar with the Bible and the Holy Word in it. The Catholic Fathers thought the people would now come to them, as the power of the fetishes was broken, but the stumbling block for the villagers was that these priests would not permit polygamy.[3]

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1 Jean Ekra.

2 Joseph, op. cit., p. 159.

3 Jean Ekra.

The Momentum of the Harris Movement

The religious movement inspired by the Prophet Harris developed swiftly in several different ways after it was, in effect, licensed by Angoulvant.[1] Firstly, there was the work Harris did himself; then there was the work of his designated or self-styled disciples; and, finally, there was the effect of the wave of rumour which swept inland, arousing expectations without giving a very clear understanding of what was happening on the coast.

Harris worked steadily to the end of the year, wandering from village to village near the coast, mostly in the vicinity of Grand Bassam. Strangely enough, although he was anxious to provide his Ebrié converts with instructors from among the clerks, he did not seek the aid of the Rev. H.G. Martin, who had just arrived as the first Protestant missionary to be stationed in the colony.

The Adjoukrous, who accepted the new religion with great sincerity, for the most part never saw Harris himself. Few of them went to Kraffy; most of them were baptized in the chief centres of their own country by the disciples Papa and Sam. A minority had probably sought baptism already, from Brown, Nivri, or Goodman, but the majority were unconverted at the time Harris was received at Bingerville. Since the disciples succeeded just as well as Harris in changing the lives of the people and freeing them from the dead hand of the traditional religion,

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[1] Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, October 1914.

Governor Angoulvant's theory that Harris was a hypnotist becomes quite irrelevant.

One group of Adjoukrous had been sent to meet Harris during the first half of the year from Bohnne, a village on the lagoon shore west of Dabou. It consisted of eleven people, one an epileptic youth, Nathaniel, who had been badly hurt by a fall from a palm tree, and a woman who suffered from sores all over her skin. The rest were not seeking to be healed but were persons of authority who wanted to test the Prophet's power. When they reached Grand Lahou, Harris was long since gone, but they found Sam and Papa working there as a team, with Papa carrying the water and Sam the Bible. They had no cross. Papa read from the Bible when he preached, and some of the Lahou people sang. When Nathaniel was baptized he began to shake, even after Papa made the sign of the cross in his face. After about an hour he felt something coming out and said to his friends, "The sickness has left me."[1] Similarly, the woman was permanently cured.

When the eleven pilgrims returned home, the rest of the villagers wanted to be baptized and went to Victor Nivri at Addah. The village church was set up under Brim (who had been chief and priest of the village) and Metch, who had been among the first group of pilgrims to Papa and were chosen as preachers by him.

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[1] Oral evidence of Nathaniel Esso and others at Bohnne, July 1963. Nathaniel apparently had no relapse after that time.

Débrimou was the Adjoukrou centre where most of the tribe were baptized, along with Ebriés, Attiés, and Abbeys, after Papa came over from Grand Lahou to be more accessible. This was apparently during the months of October and November 1914. The infant Laurent Lassm, later to become head of the Ivory Coast Methodist Church, came with his family and the rest of the village of Youhouli. There were more than 5,000 Adjoukrous gathered there, sheltered from the dry season sun by palm-frond pavilions. When a heavy shower unexpectedly fell, Papa did not use his basin of water but touched the heads the rain had wet and baptized them.[1]

The Débrimou people had been ready for the new faith from the time they heard of Harris's arrival at Lahou, as "Nyam-Etchi-Egm-Ek'rm" ("Message of God") and those among them who had the ability to detect the presence of the spirits said that these had fled and left the fetish objects, such as those attached to Séké (a protection against witches and death), Tano (a source of riches), Mando (a defence against devils), and Diby (a defence against the evil of other people), as mere lumps of material substance. As Harris had instructed, the people began to work six days and rest on the seventh, and they waited and prayed for the coming of the white missionaries he was said to have promised.[2]

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1 Oral evidence of Rev. Laurent Lassm, Dabou, August 1963.

2 Oral evidence of old men at Débrimou, August 1964.

It was apparently a Sierra Leonean trader, Jack Harris, who invited Sam to come to the Adjoukrou villages. He came to Mopoyeme, near the lagoon, where, like Papa at Dêbrimou, he spoke in English and had an interpreter. People from the interior, including Abidjis, were baptized by him there and later, after baptizing at Bouboury, Pass, and other places, he set off inland into Abbey country. This was in defiance of the local Commandant who had told him on 21 November, when he found the people at Mopoyeme being taught to worship in English, that he should return to Lahou forthwith. On the very next day Sam was baptizing at Pass.[1] The Chef de Poste also told the people to sing their hymns and say their prayers in French. This evidently alarmed them, because they had bought an English Bible, which they were accustomed to open every Sunday in the church. Too, there were some <u>old</u> men who feared this Bible because of the magic in it, so the Preacher took it in a valise and gave it to Papa.[2]

Sam had come also to Bouboury, where the people had already destroyed the fetishes in the assurance that God was more powerful. They felt a relief, because the fetishes were expensive helpmates. Sam finished baptizing them and they chose a Preacher and Twelve Apostles for their church. Henceforth they kept the Sabbath by praying in the church, by resting from work, and by taking collections which were used

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1 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, November 1914.

2 Oral evidence of old men at Mopoyeme, August 1964.

for lights and a cloth for the table. They also obtained through a firm an English Bible and a church banner inscribed in English.[1]

At Pass, also on the lagoon, the people were lucky enough to catch Harris at Kraffy. When they returned they broke their Mando and other idols, believing they were useless now that God had come, for the spirits had fled before Him. Otherwise the fetishes would have killed them when they paddled their piroques towards Kraffy. They believed Harris when he told them they would be struck by heavenly fire if they tried to worship the idols again. The villagers made a pavilion for their Sunday services and on that day they sang and repeated the Prophet's words and respected all his prohibitions for that day--they did not even dare walk in the bush, for if they were touched by a green leaf, it was a sin. As Harris had instructed them, they appointed twelve old men to be the "Twelve Apostles," and the leader, the Chef d'Église, was known as the "Peter" of the Church.[2]

Viewed as a whole, the Adjoukrou conversion was remarkably effective, and the reason for this was probably essentially the same in all the Coastal groupings: the conversion took place through the normal channels of the society. The most powerful group in the Adjoukrou community were, as noted, the active old men, the Ebebou, and these were the religious and secular leaders of the tribe. They had

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1 Still kept in the church, August 1964.

2 Oral evidence of Pastor Jean Mel, native of Pass, July 1963.

the power to inflict evil and death or goodness and life, the spirits spoke through them to men, and men through them to the spirits. These were the men who knew most about spiritual power and fetishes and who, when they wilted before the power of Harris, had no alternative but to be persuaded by it and to become most ardent preachers of it. The rank and file followed them in this new faith as they formerly had with Mando and the old gods before him.

Just as the fetishes had ruled by terror, the new God was also believed to bring death or illness to those who disobeyed him. At Orbaff a man went to the bush on Sunday when he should have been at service. On his way home he fell dead in front of the church. This judgment kept the sanctity of the Sabbath inviolate.

On the other hand, the new faith offered some very real benefits. There was now the faith that a happy eternal life was in prospect, instead of an unsubstantial existence at some nearby "village of the dead," and there was relief from the taboos which forbade work on many days and which prevented the consumption of many totem animals and fish.

At the end of October, the Governor was still giving his support to the Harris Movement. On a tour of inspection in the Dabou area, where he had to assure people that their manillas would be redeemed in silver and to explain to them why France was at war, he also told them that he had given Harris permission to remain in the

country. He was happy to see the good huts they were building for their churches because they would soon have the opportunity of building similar ones for an instructor and dispenser whom he intended to send them.[1]

During October and November the officials realized that many other people were helping Harris spread his ideas. From Bingerville in October Harris began commissioning the English-speaking clerks as "Apostles" to go out and imitate him. The Chef de Poste took a very unfavourable view of this and thought they should be watched carefully, for the greater number were not worthy of their office and had nothing to recommend them.[2] The Governor, more sympathetic, suggested only that if any of these disciples were discovered robbing the people or otherwise committing crimes, they be locked up. If not, they should be left at peace.[3]

He did not realize that a third phase of the mass movement was taking place on the fringes of the area which Harris had visited himself. One such section was in the north of the Cercle des Lagunes. There, around Agboville, in the country of the Attiés and north of that, among the Abbeys and Agnis, the religious excitement became noticeable only in October. These people were less accustomed to the European presence and

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1 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, October 1914.

2 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Abidjan Rural, October 1914.

3 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Abidjan Rural, October 1914, comments of Governor.

the adjustments it required than were the lagoon peoples. They were in the area which Angoulvant had felt could not be pacified by peaceful means. At the beginning of his appointment he had announced his intention of really taming the independent Attiés[1] and between 10 May and 13 June 1909 he had sent forces which brought them to heel. Their neighbours, the Abbeys, had armed themselves for the coming struggle and, led by their feticheurs, had cut the new railway line (which ran through their country) on 6 January 1910. They had derailed a train, cut telegraph lines, threatened Agboville, and rumours of the atrocious massacres they were said to have perpetrated terrified the towns. For nearly two weeks Agboville had been cut off but with the arrival of reinforcements, the Abbeys had been attacked in their villages until they surrendered in September 1910.[2]

The course of the Harris Movement among these three tribes was not the thorough-going spiritual revolution which took place on the coast. It was in October 1914 that the officials noticed that the natives were claiming to follow the teachings of the "Son of God," as they called Harris, but in fact, while they kept Sunday as a day of rest, this did not lead them to work the other six days. The rule which forbade the abuse of alcohol seemed to be little regarded, for in the special huts built for the new cult in all the villages were set

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1 Angoulvant, op. cit., p. 72 (footnote: letter to Governor General, 15 June 1908).

2 Amon-d'Aby, op. cit., p. 28.

open bottles of gin, such as had been found formerly in the fetish huts.[1] There were also in the area "messengers of Harris," whether authorized or not, whom the Chef de Poste suspected of taking money from the people. Angoulvant, still convinced that the movement was beneficial, suggested that certain Fantis were causing the trouble and should be suppressed. As he commented on the margin of the official's report, "Of course the Prophet Harris will have imitators less disinterested than himself, but it will be easy to send them before the tribunal of the subdivision at their first act of dishonesty."[2]

These details officially reported tend to show that the point of Harris's preaching was lost on these inland peoples. To them he remained as he had been when the first rumour of his coming reached them, a "great fetish," or a new god. Recent accounts from these three tribes bear out this interpretation. When the news of the Harris Movement had reached up into Attié country to Akoupé, 145 km. inland from Bingerville, the old men pondered what to do about it. Up to this time they had faithfully served their gods as tradition demanded, but they were not happy with the relationship. The news they had from the coast was that the great God of the Sky had descended to Earth to do good and drive out the power of the fetishes. A group of old men were chosen to go to the coast and see what it was about, taking with

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[1] Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Agboville, October 1914.

[2] Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Agboville, October 1914, comment on margin.

them two lads of about twelve as porters and messengers.[1] On the way to Agboville they arrived at Atobrou, about 50 km. from home. The people there told them it was no use going to the Prophet unless their fetishes were burned. This had been done at Atobrou. One of the boys was sent back to Akoupé to order the burning. Naturally, the villagers were afraid to do it but they brought their fetishes to the boy and he, having seen Atobrou still flourishing, burned them without fear of the consequences.

When he rejoined the group they continued to Dabou, crossed the Ebrié Lagoon by canoe, and arrived at Jacqueville, where they had hoped to find the Prophet. They told their story and spent the night and in the morning attended a church service in a palm-thatched shelter. They were baptized by a certain Momo and were then commanded to buy a Bible (a large English one) and white cotton to wrap around the cross they must make. These items came from the same shop. They bought several other items prescribed for them by Momo. The two boys carried them, and they all made their way home. When they approached Akoupé a messenger was sent ahead to make sure that all the objects used in the old worship were destroyed before the new god entered[2] because he could not live with the fetishes. When all was ready they entered and took

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[1] Oral evidence of the messenger, now an old man, at Akoupé, August 1964.

[2] That this was done in a great number of cases is made clear in Roux, op. cit., p. 137.

the sacred objects to the new hut the villagers had prepared; this became their home and here they were worshipped. The villagers adopted the new religion enthusiastically and did all Sunday's work on Saturday so that Sunday could be entirely consecrated to God.

After a time the villagers wrote a letter to the Prophet Harris, begging him to bring them help to counteract the hardships the colonial regime was imposing on them, and this letter was placed in the Bible. The Commandant, being informed, seized the letter and Bible and had the church destroyed. Another delegation went to the coast to get help and advice, but Momo had vanished and Harris was far away. So the village waited some time, hoping for enlightenment.

At the Abbey village of Cêchi, about as far inland as Akoupê but west of it, a delegation of three men and one woman managed to intercept Harris in the Lahou area. At that time the chief god of the village was Mando, who had been brought from Agni country about 1911[1] and had caused all the minor fetishes of the village to be burned. They kept one of the six days, Ovo, sacred to him, and obeyed his commandments, such as not to steal or take a neighbour's wife on the pain of death. If the date of Mando's coming is correct, it seems to bear a relation to the defeat of the Abbeys which took place under Governor Angoulvant's direction in the first four months of 1910. It

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[1] This date is hardly more than a guess. Father Gorju dates Mando as coming to Bonoua in 1903. However, at Cêchi Mando is regarded as a "John the Baptist" in relation to Harris, so the link in time may be as close as suggested here.

may well be that disillusionment with the old gods led to Mando's triumph.

The rumours which reached them in 1913 suggested that there was a more powerful and more helpful god than Mando. The delegation to Lahou found Harris[1] and when he asked them if they would work with God they agreed to do so, but how? He told them they must not worship fetishes, must build a house where together they could worship God, and they must obey God's moral commandments. The delegation turned homeward and news of their coming preceded them. The villagers believed they were bringing a great fetish with them and prepared their little fetishes to meet him. They made music on their drums and danced in excitement. The delegation halted some distance away and sent a messenger to tell them to stop the noise and put down the fetish objects because it was God, "Ofo," whom they were bringing. They entered the village singing hymns and carrying a Bible and the tricolour. When they stopped they asked, "Do you want to work for God?" The villagers all replied, "Yes." "If you agree to do this, then bring your fetishes together here and destroy them." Then each man and family brought up the fetishes; each individual was baptized by a touch of the Bible on his head, and then his fetishes were burned. A good many, perhaps all, of these objects were associated with Mando.

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[1] At any rate, they think it was Harris, but it was more likely Brown or another disciple.

People soon developed ways of worship and sang hymns in their own language. One of these, "We are come from God, we are children of God," was sung over sick people to cure them, and even over the dead to restore them to life.

The Commandant of the area disapproved of the new religion and destroyed the church. Some of the villagers went to seek Harris and found him at Bassam and were baptized by him, which strengthened his hold on them. Obviously, because Harris could restore men dying from their sins, as people saw in his presence, he was stronger than Mando, and because his God demanded no gifts, while Mando demanded many, it was more satisfactory to worship the former.

However, the popularity of Harris's God did not last. A woman died and they sang the healing hymn over her. They thought she was beginning to revive when one of the old men spat on the ground and broke the spell. She remained dead and after that they could revive nobody else and they became so discouraged that they decided God had deserted them again and returned to the old ways of worshipping.[1]

The Agnis of the Cercle around Bongouanou, another 50 km. north, do not seem to have understood even as well as the Attiés and Abbeys the nature of Harris's mission, and their hopes of his intervention were similar to those of the Sanwi Agnis. The village of Assaoufoué seems to have first sent a delegation "to bring back the

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[1] Oral evidence of old men at Céchi, August 1964.

church so that there would be no more taxes or forced labour."[1] The envoys found a prophet who baptized them and put the Bible on their heads, and when they returned they followed his instructions which, as they understood them, involved putting a great pot of water in the middle of the village to which everybody gathered and took a drink. This kind of Communion Service made them "all one in Christ," and was their baptism. Then the instructions of the prophet were given: not to worship fetishes, not to kill others by witchcraft, not to work on Sunday, not to commit theft or adultery, and the positive commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself. These rules being accepted, a church was built and the Chief sent word to the Commandant that "We are Christians now so we do not have to pay taxes." In brief, being as one in Christ and loving one another was not the end they sought, but merely means to an end.

On 12 November 1914 the Administrateur of the Cercle des Lagunes thought fit to put the Governor on guard with respect to the whole Harris Movement. He cast no doubts on the sincerity of Harris himself but thought the zeal of his disciples lay in the prospect of receiving goods from the faithful. He admitted that on this point Harris had been "of a disinterestedness as remarkable as it is prudent, which alone has justified us in tolerating his presence in the colony." However, he urged, if a close watch on them showed that the disciples

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[1] Oral evidence of old preacher and others at Assaoufoué, August 1964.

were committing any dishonesty in obtaining what they considered a fair remuneration for their priestly offices, they should certainly be brought before the tribunal of the subdivision.[1]

At the end of that month the Chef de Poste reported that the activity of the "Son of God" was still being observed, although Harris himself had left the Cercle des Lagunes. While his actions were certainly not clearly hostile to the French, yet the natives had become even more apathetic to the improvements the Administration was trying to foster among them. For example, at the beginning of November they had been asked to fix that section of the Biassalé road stretching between Aboudé and Yaozrah and they did it unwillingly. They were very busy at that time constructing churches.[2]

Furthermore, numerous emissaries of Harris had been and were still circulating in the region, baptizing and extorting funds from the natives. It was very difficult to catch these individuals because the natives helped them to hide themselves.

> It is certain that with the disappearance of Harris, this effervescence will diminish until, little by little, it will disappear completely. Within a few weeks a majority of the Abbeys will have already forgotten the Prophet, provided that his emissaries be energetically hounded and it be made impossible for them to carry on with their rogueries.[3]

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1 Dakar, Report of Administrateur, Cercle des Lagunes, 12 November 1914.

2 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Agboville, November 1914.

3 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Agboville, November 1914.

Along the coast, the new religion seemed solidly entrenched during November and the regions which had seen Harris himself were now "plagued by false prophets" imitating him. Even in the Abidjan region, men from the English colonies and members of the Wesleyan Church were going into the Ebrié villages on Sundays, directing the services and instructing in the necessity for collections. Threatened with the tribunal, "these false ministers" thereafter stayed at home.[1]

In the interior around Adzopé the Attiés were, it was said by officials, being converted to the new religion during October, and in November the Harris disciples were reported on every hand.[2] Beyond the borders of this Cercle, in the Cercle du N'Zi-Comoé, there were likewise repercussions. At the end of November the Chef de Poste at Bongouanou could write:

> The approach of the 'son of God,' as they call William Harris, has somewhat intrigued the indigenes who have immediately sent for the news. An emissary, on returning to his village Kangandissou, has made the place agog with excitement, and I would almost say with joy, by announcing that the Prophet was coming to expel all the whites and that his power was irresistible. He has been apprehended and disciplined, the population spoken to, and things have immediately been restored to normal.
>
> At Assié Akpoessé, on the other hand, the Chief has washed his stool and burned all the fetiches of the village, hence a great palaver with the chief of the tribe. The inhabitants of Assié Akpoessé were sure, according to the tidings brought back by their messengers from Agboville where Harris is said to be,

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1 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Abidjan Rural, November 1914.

2 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Adzopé, November 1914.

> that the latter would give them the power of being free and no longer ordered about by anybody.[1]

However, while these incidents interested him, the Chef de Poste saw nothing serious in them. The Administration evidently felt otherwise, for this report was one of several sent on eventually to Dakar.

The Administrateur of the Cercle du N'Zi-Comoê observed:

> These rumours have not passed beyond the region of Agboville, Cêchi, Sahoua, and Bongouanou, and they relate, according to the natives, to events which took place in the Agboville region. I immediately made enquiries of the Chef of this post who acquainted me with the fact that W.W. Harris was not making, properly speaking, a propaganda hostile to our influence, but that the results of his preaching had been deplorable because it had results contrary to those which he desired. Aside from the region indicated above where, anyway, all things quickly come to a head, the influence of W.W. Harris should not again be felt in N'Zi-Comoê. It would be worth while to watch this individual closely and to give him a strict line of conduct so as not to see the natives, to whom the meaning of these things is incomprehensible, misunderstand his ideas which are so excellent in themselves, according to letter No. 214 G.P. of 24 September 1914.

He went on to say that if Harris came as far as N'Zi-Comoê he would give him precise instructions and would warn the population against misinterpreting his preaching.

> In order to put an end to the doings of a certain Koa Kokora of the village of Kangandissou, who was only thinking of personal benefits when he was spreading as he pleased the most fantastic rumours concerning the aim of W.W. Harris, I have altered to 15 days in prison without increasing the fine the punishment of 8 days in prison and 50 francs fine inflicted on this individual by the Chef de Poste at Bongouanou.[2]

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1 Dakar, Report of Chef de Poste, Bongouanou, November 1914.

2 Dakar, Report of Chef de Poste, Bongouanou, November 1914.

Meanwhile, in the regions along the Ebrié Lagoon, the Harris Movement was pulsating and beginning to cause concern to the Administration. The Chef de Poste found Victor Nivri of Addah baptizing villagers at some distance from home. "I invited him to go exercise his ministry in his own village."[1] At Mopoyeme he found "Samuel" and warned him to go away. Harris himself was wandering somewhere along the coast between Assinie and Bassam.

During the months in which religious excitement swept the country the Fathers of Lyon hesitated to define their attitude towards it. At the beginning they had patronized Harris and were delighted with the crowds which overwhelmed their little church at Bingerville and demanded Holy Medals to wear as signs of their new allegiance. When the Fathers were reduced in numbers following mobilization, from about seventeen to six, they became alarmed at the strength of Harris's success. At the end of October they conferred and decided to watch carefully the results of "the magnetism and hysteria" the Prophet controlled and to take advantage of its results.[2]

When it became clear that a number of English-speaking Protestant clerks were assisting Harris in evangelizing and teaching the elements of Christianity, the Fathers took the line that the Prophet was an imposter and a tool of "Protestantism," and Father Gorju's pre-

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[1] Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, November 1914.

[2] J. Gorju, "Un Prophète à la Côte-d'Ivoire," L'Écho des Missions Africaines de Lyon, XIV, 4, September-October 1915, p. 109.

judiced account was largely accepted as the Catholic view thereafter. Gorju claimed that Harris hypnotized and terrified the people into believing that he could kill or injure them or even turn them into animals.[1] Even so, Gorju could find no fault with his moral teachings, save to denigrate their significance by saying that, since polygamy was not forbidden ("didn't the Pontiff himself give the example with his disciples dressed in white?"),[2] the terrified people did not find it difficult to leave their fetishes "to embrace this new religion, so uncomplicated in its dogmas and so benign in its precepts."[3]

Harris's assistants were described as following the same policy of intimidation and fraud as their master. They forced the people to build chapels and made them believe the dead could be brought back to life by prayers and hymns. "Resurrection, if one may express it thus, became the vogue," not that it ever succeeded, but belief in its probability was supported by tales of other villages where it had happened. So the prophets were honoured everywhere, but they,

> far from imitating the prudent and polite reserve of their Forerunner, soon openly showed their hatred of Catholicism, whose ministers they loaded with false slanderous charges, as well as their hatred of the very name "French." They openly declared that these hard and demanding masters would soon be chased from the Colony. One of them launched a rumour at the very gates of Bingerville by announcing that a lion from Liberia, where he had

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1 Gorju, "Un Prophète," op. cit., p. 112.

2 Ibid., p. 113.

3 Ibid., p. 113.

> already devoured the Catholic Missionaries, was entering Ivory Coast in order to eat all the Fathers and all the French.[1]

This agitator was reported to Father Gorju and was soon too busy breaking stones for road building to make up any more tales. Father Gorju took the story seriously enough to think that it might refer to the "Boche tiger" which was present in Liberia in the form of German residents and emissaries. They were said to have told one of the Fathers there, at the time hostilities commenced, that they would make all the trouble possible for the French.

At about this time, from the Cercle d'Assinie, where for a decade ill feeling had increased between the Administration and the Agnis, came accounts of a situation suddenly becoming very serious. This was especially so as throughout the country the departure of most of the Europeans on the outbreak of war was regarded as the beginning of a complete and permanent French withdrawal.[2]

The Cercle d'Assinie

The most easterly district of the Ivory Coast, consisting chiefly of the Agni Kingdom of Sanwi, received the Harris faith in a manner peculiar to themselves; its repercussions were at once more alarming to the authorities and in the end less rewarding to the church than that among the lagoon peoples, and for one and the same reason.

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[1] Gorju, "Un Prophète," op. cit., p. 115.

[2] Abid. X-39-4, Report of Chef de Poste, Fresco, September 1914.

The chief town on the coast in this area was Assinie, founded in the 18th century, which became a centre for French missionaries and French armed forces.[1] The Agnis had reached the area about 1820, being pushed westward by the Ashantis,[2] and the caravan routes to the north led from the coast through the Agni Kingdom of Sanwi, with its capital at Krinjabo. For a long time the Kings of Krinjabo had allowed no European installations in their territory, though by a treaty of 1843-44 the Kingdom was under the protection of France.[3] After some French traders settled at Assinie, cloth, powder and arms, alcohol and tobacco--the staples of the West Coast trade everywhere--were carried inland. Gradually, European influences penetrated the Kingdom of Sanwi; Aboisso, not far from the royal capital, was settled by European traders from about 1900, and the traditional agriculture of the region suffered as the people strove to profit from the commercial demand for rubber and mahogany. After 1900 the cutting and shipping of mahogany grew quickly; the 10,000 metric tons shipped from Assinie in 1900 became after 1910 more than 20,000 tons annually. This growing trade brought new interests and ideas to Sanwi, and groups of strangers, Fanti Christians and even Muslims from the north, came to live among the Agnis. Coffee was also being grown by 1900 on European plantations and wild rubber was gathered

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[1] G. Rougerie, "Les Pays Agni du Sud-Est de la Côte d'Ivoire Forestière," Études Éburnéennes, VI, 1957, p. 87.

[2] Tauxier, op. cit., p. 7.

[3] Rougerie, op. cit., p. 87.

in the forest.[1]

Until 1903 the King at Krinjabo maintained his sovereignty throughout the region save at Assinie itself, and justice was administered by him and his agents. But in 1903, when King G'Ban Konassi died, the French began to administer the Kingdom directly, ignoring tradition and the protective relationship they were legally obligated to observe. From the contemptuous way[2] in which the French asserted their authority came the troubles which affected relations between the Administration and the Kingdom not only to the end of the French regime but even when the Ivory Coast had gained her independence.

Christianity came with the Catholic missionaries who started work at Assinie in 1897 and later they moved inland. Assinie was essentially a foreign excresence and offered no opening for the conversion of Sanwi. When in 1900 the missionary Father Bonhomme went to old King Akassimadou at Krinjabo, he was categorically refused permission to establish a mission station in his country. The Fathers had to store their new prefabricated house, brought from Europe, at Assinie, but a few months later the old king died and King G'Ban Konassi then permitted them to build at Aby, on a high hill overlooking the immense lagoon. Pupils came to them for instruction and the Mission seemed a success

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[1] Rougerie, op. cit., p. 91.

[2] For example, the King at Krinjabo was no longer paid a gratuity of 6,000 francs and a head tax was imposed. Tauxier, op. cit., p. 182.

until all the inhabitants of the village moved away, as was their wont. In January 1904 the Catholic missionaries came to Aboisso and in 1905 built a fine mission house with bricks from their brickyard at Mooussou.

In 1913 economic problems aggravated the political ones. The market for wild rubber collapsed and with it the chief source of money for the inhabitants of the area; the Agnis ceased also to dominate the chief commercial routes to the savannah when the building of the Abidjan-Bouaké railway opened a better route.[1] Yet the taxes imposed by the French Administration were demanded as before and the Agnis and the groups of Apollonians who were native there were discontented and envious of their kinsmen in the Gold Coast.

It was at this time that Harris hastened along the shore, virtually unnoticed, through "Big Assinie" and on to "Half Assinie" in the Gold Coast. Hearing of him, throngs of Agnis and Apollonians crossed over the Tendo Lagoon or the River Tano to witness his power. They followed him to Axim and those who would not come so far met him when he passed a second time through Assinie.

During September 1914, according to the Chef de Poste at Aboisso, although the natives of Sanwi came to talk to him only under duress, the return of Harris from the Gold Coast had drawn them in crowds to Assinie to be converted and instructed. He was annoyed, but he dismissed the incident as an illustration of the natives' incompre-

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[1] Rougerie, op. cit., p. 95.

hensible system of values. The newly-appointed Administrateur, M. Bru, suggested that while Harris was of no danger at the moment, yet in future he might be. On the other hand, Harris might be of great utility to the Administration.[1]

Bru found reasons to be dissatisfied with the atmosphere in the Cercle d'Assinie, quite apart from the Harris movement. Neither the natives nor the Sudanese and Senegalese living among them seemed sympathetic to France in her moment of peril and did not respond, as those in other places did, when subscriptions were opened for the war victims.[2]

During October the adherents of the Wesleyan Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches were filled with an extraordinary zeal; they were assiduous in evangelizing those whom Harris had baptized, and did it in the spirit of rivalry. Each group planted catechists to teach and persuade the truth of their particular doctrines in as many villages as they could. The Chef de Poste had to warn certain villages in the Krinjabo region when some disorders took place led by rival catechists.[3]

During the month the Catholic missionary Father Bonhomme travelled through the Cercle, including the Krinjabo area, and his counsels reinforced the warning of the Administration in settling the

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[1] Abid. X-27-14, Report of Chef de Poste, Aboisso, September 1914, and comments of Administrateur.

[2] Abid. X-27-14, Report of Administrateur, Assinie, 3rd quarter 1914.

[3] Abid. X-27-14, Report of Chef de Poste, Aboisso, October 1914.

unrest.[1] It was of him or a colleague that Father Gorju wrote:

> One of our missionaries who was touring in a series of villages where the mere announcements of these events [the marvels associated with Harris] magnified by distance, had caused agitation, did he not also nearly become a prophet despite himself? ... At the news of his approach the entire population came to meet him, in festive dress, to the sounds of chants and music. He would be led in great pomp to a big hut, newly built. After a new, very loud and frenzied, series of chants a deathly hush indicated to him that it was time to begin to preach. All were hanging on his words, but it was not always prudent to warn them against the Prophet Harris; did not one of the assistants affirm to the Father publicly, during a meeting, that he had seen, with his own eyes, at Assinie, the new Messiah take the moon in his teeth!! ... Some women, in hysterical convulsions caused by the exultation of the moment, would be taken to him and he would pronounce over them a simulated exorcism; these unhappy creatures immediately fell into a cataleptic sleep. Next there was the auto da fé of the fetishes burned in a heap in a public spot. At last the good missionary was able to regain his lodging at Aboisso safe and sound. While still under the impression of this uncommon experience he confided to me, one day, that if, unfortunately, the methods of true evangelization were not other than this, he was confident of being able, by going with a great deal of self-possession and not a little charlatanism, to convert in a few months all the Ivory Coast!![2]

Whoever this priest was, his experience indicates how difficult it must have been for any practising Christian, including the clerks, to refuse to assist people in burning their fetishes and learning the rudiments of Christianity.

Such a degree of religious excitement, combined with the emergency of the European war, gave the Administration reason enough for keeping a close watch on developments. By the end of October the

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[1] Abid. X-27-14, Report of Chef de Poste, Aboisso, October 1914, remarks of Administrateur Bru.

[2] Gorju, "Un Prophète," op. cit., p. 113.

situation in the Cercle d'Assinie was becoming unexpectedly complicated. The conflicting groups were not interested simply in different forms of Christianity but in nationalism, which expressed itself in the guise of religion. On the surface it was not black nationalism versus white, but showed itself in the guise of colonial rivalry, English versus French. The converts who chose to become Wesleyans thereby seemed to feel that they had voted themselves English, while the Catholics were to be French. The Administrateur actually warned the preachers that he could admit of no such distinction and that he knew "in this country none but French subjects." He reported:

> This religious agitation is nowhere but on the surface; it would be a serious misunderstanding of the Agnis to believe them capable of making grave trouble for themselves for the sake of religions to which they are and will be for a long time uncommitted.
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> I do not believe they see anything more in these discussions than a new chance to waste their time in palavers.[1]

Despite his doubts, Bru was impressed by the widespread conversions and destruction of fetishes throughout the inland region, including Sanwi. The Protestants attained that respectability formerly accorded only to the Catholic Fathers when the Methodist Missionary, H.G. Martin from Grand Bassam, travelled through the district, and perhaps this made Bru think more kindly of the religious upheaval. He still had a great deal of contempt for the reasons behind it. It was largely, he suggested, due to the desire of people to be in fashion,

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[1] Abid. X-27-14, Report of Chef de Poste, Aboisso, October 1914, remarks of Administrateur Bru.

and so the depth and duration of its good effects were not apt to be great; yet,

> I will not risk being precise, but on the moral side the natives of Sanwi have very much to learn and acquire; that is why I think we should observe with sympathy the efforts of the Christian missionaries.

It had occurred to him too, as to many others, that with Turkey allied to Germany in Europe, there would be spiritual pressures on the Muslim inhabitants of the French Empire to defend the cause of their religious leader, the Sultan. So he concluded that the Christian missionaries

> could also serve us in the political point of view if (but I do not think that in this region we have anything of the sort to fear), the Muslims, obedient to external instigations, become restless.[1]

During December the religious excitement in the Cercle d'Assinie rose to an even greater pitch and the Administrateur ceased to extract any comfort from it. It was inland, in the Agni country, rather than along the coast with its mixed population, that the greatest alarm was felt. From Assinie, in fact, there was nothing special to report, according to the Chef de Poste, save that the natives were going to bed later because they spent every evening in the church or "temple" learning to sing hymns. Their singing showed a regular improvement, but so far as honest labour was concerned, they were as uninterested as ever. The Chef de Poste thought that while the Prophet had taught them to rest on Sundays he had

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[1] Abid. X-27-14, Report of Chef de Poste, Aboisso, November 1914, and remarks by Administrateur Bru.

forgotten to tell them, or they themselves had managed to forget, that they should work the other six days. "He has not said more to them than that they should listen to the Whiteman who also desires only their well-being."

All the villages along the lagoon had built special huts for their religious meetings, and there they gathered in the evenings, filling the days between, as was their wont, with their interminable palavers. Although they had enthusiastically accepted the principles of Christianity, they had not learned the virtues or dignity of labour.[1] Yet this much good was anticipated from their conversion: the high rate of mortality which resulted from the red-wood test and other intrigues of fetishism would be diminished.

The Chef de Poste at Assinie, unlike the Administrateur, was not impressed by the results of the visit of the Protestant Missionary to the area; Martin had failed to call on him and this may have coloured his feelings. He felt the visit had only stirred up trouble between Protestant and Catholic, and that they were calmed only by his warning to both factions, and especially to the English-speaking Protestants, that at the least dissension he would close down all houses of worship.[2]

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[1] All the evidence suggests that in most areas where Harris's influence was felt, people did learn to labour and to improve their sanitary arrangements. The Assinie and Agboville regions were thus exceptions.

[2] Abid. X-27-14, Report of Chef de Poste, Assinie, December 1914.

From Aboisso, in the heart of the Sanwi Kingdom, the situation looked much more dangerous than it did on the coast. The Protestants were extremely active; nearly every village had been visited by Fanti or Apollonian pastors of meagre education and unscrupulous consciences, known in many cases to have an unsavoury past.

> These propagators of the faith, left to themselves without supervision and guidance, are at times guilty, through an excess of zeal, of mischievous digressions. The natives have generally admitted that the Catholic religion was that of the French, and that Protestantism was special to the English (French Protestant pastors being very rare in these parts). From that to proclaim that those who would be Protestant should become English is only a step. This step has been taken.
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> More than this, a rumour is abroad in the country according to which, after the war, France will cede Sanwi and perhaps all the Ivory Coast to England in exchange for another territory, and that those who do not show themselves a little devoted to the English will be severely punished in a few months. The authors and the purveyors of these tidings are still unknown; but it is nearly evident that the Protestant party is not without knowledge of these things. Involuntarily perhaps ...
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> As a result, the practice of this religion in the region ought to be strictly watched and we ought to demand of the coloured apostles standards of morality and honesty which the majority of them are far from possessing. We could thus check the tendentious rumours and the false ideas which could in the future, from a simple struggle between religious sects, albeit with much in common, give birth to a conflict of nationalities between subjects of one and the same race and nation.[1]

When Bru forwarded the December reports of his subordinates to the Governor he was so concerned with the situation that he analyzed it in depth to discover where French policy had gone wrong in the region. There was no doubting the seriousness of affairs in Sanwi, he

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[1] Abid. X-27-14, Report of Chef de Poste, Aboisso, December 1914.

thought; the passage of Harris which had led to an upsurge in Wesleyan activity had brought a crisis because it offered the people for the first time a choice between two religions, and by extension between two nationalities, French and English. Bru credited the government "of the neighbouring colony" with not favouring this movement, and even ignoring it, yet he advised that no Protestant churches be permitted in any of the villages, thus preventing the preachers who were English-orientated from winning over the people by their words. He said:

> These missionaries should provide themselves with a special authorization for each religious edifice they desire to open. They should present their native evangelists to us. They should not be authorized to preach in public places and before gatherings save when we are satisfied as to their morals.

On those at present active he said:

> The Liberian Harris has chosen his lieutenants exclusively among the foreign Fantis, Apollonians, ex-clerks, ex-shopkeepers, who are far from presenting us with any desirable guarantees.[1]

Bru did not find it strange that the Agnis of Sanwi had lost confidence in the French and looked towards the neighbouring colony of the English. In the eyes of the French, he thought, the natives had always been regarded as liers and idlers, meriting neither attention nor study, because in spirit and culture they were so dissimilar to themselves. They had been allowed to become the prey of agents of commerce and business, and of the literate Fantis and Apollonians of the Gold Coast.

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[1] Abid. X-27-14, Report of Chef de Poste, Assinie, December 1914, remarks of Administrateur Bru.

> We have not aided them nor defended them against the timber exploiters, miners and others, and after that we are ourselves astonished at not having any influence or prestige among them.

As Chef de Poste at Assinie six years earlier, he had known a happier state of affairs, and on his return to the area in 1914 he had seen signs of regression, not of progress. Villages had become depopulated, family groups had broken up, and no one wanted to take on responsibility as Chief of a village or even of a household. There was an obvious mistrust of and an aversion to the authorities. The French had done nothing constructive to mould the indigenous population, and so the initiative for change had passed to the tax-gatherers, exploiters, and the "self-styled pastors or Bible-carriers" from the Gold Coast. Particular harm had been done to the French "image" by those colonials who engaged labourers and then refused to pay them. Bru warned the Governor that if serious precautions were not taken, then in a relatively short period of time the French would have only a ruined and depopulated country and, moreover, "the evil influence we have fostered here will gain ground and infect neighbouring cercles."[1]

The Expulsion of Harris

Despite the alarming turn of events in the eastern district of the colony, most of the Cercle des Lagunes seemed by December to have settled down peacefully enough to practise its new faith and to

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[1] Abid. X-27-14, Report of Chef de Poste, Aboisso, December 1914, remarks of Administrateur Bru.

please the officials by a show of industriousness. The Chef de Poste at Dabou had escorted the head of the Agricultural Service around his district visiting promising plantations, among them that of Victor Nivri at Addah. Everywhere were the new churches, and there was no sign left of any other worship than Harris's.[1] In the vicinity of Abidjan there was not the same spirit, due to the fact that Protestant natives had been warned by the Administration to stay away from villages where they took part in "a religion which was not theirs."[2] No doubt it was feared that Protestant and English would be equated there as in Sanwi. Without the help of the clerks there was no one to instruct in the new faith and it lagged.

Only around Agboville was there trouble. Besides the usual evasions of duty and the flight of people to the bush when they knew the Chef de Poste was approaching, the four villages of the Azaguie group were hostile. They refused to clear their roads, to prepare palm nuts, to collect kola nuts, or even to honour the contracts into which they had entered voluntarily with the timber merchants. The leaders of this resistance were to be found at Aoua (a village some 40 km. from Abidjan) which was also a centre for the new religion. Chief Adou, who had been hiding in the forest and directing the party hostile to the French since the suppression of 1910, attracted support

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1 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, December 1914.

2 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Abidjan Rural, December 1914.

through the new faith and using it, he spread the rumour through the region that two Government Officers had already died for persecuting the new Saviour and that others would share the same fate. He was only one of a number of die-hard old warriors still fighting the French under-handedly.[1]

In the Cercle de Lahou there had been a wave of religious enthusiasm raised by the preaching of Samuel Reffell,[2] the disciple of Harris,[3] during September, but there was nothing political about it. It did lead to numerous baptisms. During October there was unrest in the upper part of the Cercle, especially in the Lakota-Zikiso area. It was not identified by the Administrateur as part of the religious movement; Apollonians, Fantis, and Sierra Leoneans were credited with causing it by spreading rumours that the Germans had invaded French territory and that the French were on the verge of being defeated.[4] At about the same time the Didas of Lozoua gave proof of their ill-will by refusing to provide porters to carry supplies inland to Lakota.[5] Finally, on 10 December the Prophet Harris himself arrived again at Lahou.

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1 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Agboville, December 1914.

2 Reffell, a Sierra Leonean, may have been the J.W. Reffell reported earlier as being at Ebonou. He may also have been the "Sam" so active among the Adjoukrous in November.

3 Abid. X-39-4, Report of Chef de Poste, Lahou, September 1914.

4 Abid. X-39-4, Report of Administrateur, Cercle de Lahou, 3rd quarter 1914.

5 Abid. X-39-4, Report of Chef de Poste, Lahou, October 1914.

Administrateur Corbière at Lahou was not keen on having Harris in his district and was pleased to hear from him that God was recalling him to the Gold Coast. After one full day at Lahou, Harris started eastward but at the edge of the Cercle (presumably at Kraffy again) he halted, and crowds went to him to be baptized.[1] The Administrateur was aware of this but as he thought Harris was not exercising any harmful influence, he did nothing about it. Three churches had been tolerated in Lahou for some months: one for the Avikams, who had been warned against allowing false disciples of Harris to mislead them and take their money, one for a group of Apollonians and Fantis who had been in the town a long time and wished to worship under a Catholic Father,[2] and a Protestant Church attended by several hundred people from the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone.

By this time Angoulvant, despite his personal good-will towards Harris, was obliged to consider whether, at a time when the country was upset over the war, the economic crisis, and the withdrawal of administrative personnel, it might not be safer for the religious movement to be dampened down. The reaction to the new faith on the part of such groups as the Ebriés, Adjoukrous, and Alladians showed no special anti-government tendencies, but the strange expectations being reported from the eastern and northern parts of the Cercle des Lagunes were alarming.

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1 Abid. X-39-4, Report of Administrateur, Cercle de Lahou, 4th quarter 1914.

2 Not until 1920 could the mission send a priest.

At Bingerville it was decided that Harris must be sent home and the new religion must be stamped out of existence. On 16 December a confidential memorandum went out to all Administrateurs:

> From information coming to me from different sources it appears that the moral-improving activity of the 'prophet' William Wade Harris is interpreted in a different fashion by the natives and is hampered in a rather unfortunate way mainly by his imitators, improvised pastors recruited from among clerks severed, often for delicate reasons, from their counters.
>
> So it is that one Administrateur has told me about the rumour circulating in his cercle that Harris was going to succeed in obtaining before long a reduction in the rate of tax and even the suppression of the capitation.
>
> In the impossible situation in which the much-reduced personnel of the cercles now find themselves, the doings of these more or less religious personages (we do not really know who they are or where they come from, or what are their real intentions) cannot be watched closely enough, therefore you will, without being abrupt, rid your area of these people. You will invite the pretended 'sons of God' who have been roaming to the villages recently to return to their own country where they will be able to spread the good word easily. The Prophet Harris in particular will find in Liberia, his own country, a sufficiently vast field for activity.
>
> This measure is necessary at a moment when the events in Europe demand more than ever the maintenance of tranquility among the peoples of the Colony, and for that you must prevent the birth and circulation of all false news which might upset the people.[1]

The details of the expulsion of Harris are not clear. Since he was at Kraffy when the decision to expel him was made, he was evidently arrested there and taken to Lahou. Presumably it was at this time that, as Harris later told Benoit, Administrateur Corbière

> ... asked me why I always continue to preach. I said to him, 'I am a prophet like Elijah--to destroy the fetishes.' But then they acted like pagans, they mocked me and said, 'The Bible is no good.'

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[1] Dakar, Confidential Memorandum from the Lieutenant-Governor of the Ivory Coast to Administrateurs of the Cercles, 16 December 1914.

> I said to them, 'I stand up to witness for Jesus Christ.' But they burst into laughter and said, 'You are only a Kruman to row and carry hammock, that is all. You cannot teach us.' But I read to them from the Bible, Acts 5:39, 'If this work be of men, it will come to naught, but if it be of God you cannot overthrow it.' then they began to abuse me, 'Dastard, idiot of a Kruman,' and they led me away to prison.[1]

Harris and the three women were carried to Dabou and then to Abidjan. They were stripped and beaten, their calabashes and the cross broken, and their money and clothes stolen. Mrs. Hannah Johnson and other friends living at Bassam sent money and clothes to them, bribing the guards to do so.[2] Six months later, Father Gorju described the incident unsympathetically thus:

> Harris himself, having made an ill-timed reappearance at Abidjan, was apprehended without respect, stripped of his sacred staff, had his beautiful robe replaced by a common worn loincloth and finally was expelled from the colony. The time had passed when this crafty individual, profiting by the similarity of names recognized, as an incarnation of his protector the Archangel Gabriel, the person of the Governor of the Colony, who was astonished at this celestial origin which he had never suspected.[3]

Local tradition is misleading on this imprisonment at Abidjan, putting it prior to the time Harris preached at Bingerville under the Governor's benign eye. According to them, he came out of the locked prison every morning by miraculous means and the brutal guard, Kouacou, who had broken his cross, was found as if burnt by a thunderbolt.[4]

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1 Benoit's Report.

2 Benoit's Report (account from Mrs. Hannah Johnson).

3 Gorju, "Un Prophète," op. cit., p. 116.

4 Oral evidence of Mathieu Adobi and Abraham Nandjui.

Another account says Kouacou died when Harris clashed his calabash while sitting on the threshold of the prison,[1] but this is told in ignorance of the smashing of those calabashes. It testifies at least to the awe felt for the power of the calabashes that this story was told, and that in it Harris was set free by the Governor.

Instead, he was taken to Bassam and held there until a ship came by which he could be sent home. Crowds of people came to see him depart, and tradition says that he was searched by the authorities to see whether he had taken a great deal of money from his converts. The point of this story is to prove that he had taken nothing but had the 7/6 with which he claimed to have started from home. A quite different version tells of a much larger sum, the correct amount for the passage of himself and the two women[2] to Cape Palmas, put in his baggage miraculously.[3] Father Gorju said the women were discovered to have 7,000 francs in their possession,[4] but he did not term it a miracle.

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[1] Oral evidence of the Preacher, Methodist Church, Songon M'Brathé, August 1963.

[2] There were only two women to go with him, since Grace Thannie from Apollonia returned home at this point. One of the two Liberian women was unsophisticated and from the bush, and since she later bore Harris a son (Benoit's Report), may be counted as his wife. The other was Mrs. Helen Valentine, a cultured person, widow probably of the Rev. N. Yuku Valentine who had died in 1907 shortly before being ordained, like his father, as a full priest of the Protestant Episcopal Church (see p. 59). Mrs. Valentine had seen signs in the sky and in visions which led her to accompany Harris, according to information gleaned by Benoit. Her injuries received in prison in Abidjan were so serious that she died soon after returning home.

[3] Daniel Aka Coblan.

[4] Gorju, "Un Prophète," op. cit., p. 116.

A quite different account of Harris's departure, putting the Administration in a much better light, has been given wide currency through Methodist Missionary accounts. Captain Marty, in his account published in 1922, stated that when the request to return home was put to him, "Harris, always dignified, started back, his pilgrim's staff in his hand, towards Cape Palmas."[1] A few years later, when F.D. Walker of the Methodist Missionary Society was in the Ivory Coast collecting facts about Harris, he was given a full and moving description of this dignified exit. The officer, M. Paoli, had gone to Port-Bouët in April or May 1915, on hearing by rumour that Harris was holding a service on the shore. Here he preached and baptized while Paoli observed him, and when the service was over and the officer told him he had come to escort him to the frontier, he went with him meekly.[2]

Possibly this was a return visit by Harris, but administrative records make no mention of any attempted return before the end of 1915, and then he was stopped on the frontier.[3] The same records give no details of the manner of his expulsion, but the order was given, as shown, in December 1914, and in the same month began the full scale suppression of the movement; it seems incredible that Harris could have been wandering about freely during a further four months.

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1 Marty, op. cit., p. 18.

2 F.D. Walker, The Story of the Ivory Coast, London, 1926, p. 19.

3 Abid. X-21-441, Political Report for Ivory Coast, 1915.

Moreover, the French Vice-Consul in Monrovia, M. Baret, who had been asked in December to inquire into Harris's antecedants, reported in February that Harris had been expelled from the Ivory Coast and was in Cape Palmas in January (1915).[1] It seems most probable, in the light of this evidence, that Government agents wished to appear more benign in their treatment of Harris than they were in reality.

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[1] Dakar, Report of French Vice-Consul, Monrovia, to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paris, 19 February 1915. A Mr. Johnson, an American missionary, is quoted as having recently questioned Harris from a purely religious point of view, and had "quickly perceived that he was only an imposter." This must have been W.H. Johnson of the Assembly of God Mission, located two days inland from Cape Palmas, since there was no Johnson with the Catholic, Methodist, or Protestant Episcopal Missions at Cape Palmas. (Letter from Dr. Walter Cason, Cuttington College, 27 July 1963.) It seems odd that one of the more orthodox missionaries was not queried for information.

CHAPTER V

THE AFTERMATH OF THE HARRIS MOVEMENT 1915-1923

The expulsion of Harris did not halt the progression of religious and social changes he had set in train. In the Gold Coast the Methodists and Roman Catholics freely competed to win over his converts, and new religious communities appeared as well. In the Ivory Coast, on the other hand, the expectations of the converts were so much at variance with the policies of the Administration, and the Christian Missions were so weak, that for some years the official attitude was that the new religion should be totally suppressed, and since the missionaries by their activities might keep it alive, every discouragement was put in their way.

From the beginning of 1915, as official records show, churches were being ruthlessly destroyed, especially in the Cercle des Lagunes, where force could be more easily deployed. The Administration was heartened when some of the elders among the Abbeys in the Agboville region assisted in the arrest of one of the new "Sons of God" agitating there.[1] In the Dabou region some converted villages were refusing to pay the tax. Numerous Abbeys were coming down from Agboville to be baptized by Djibi, a native of the village of Gomou.[2] Because of the wide-

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[1] Abid. X-46-26, Report of Chef de Poste, Agboville, January 1915.

[2] Abid. X-46-26, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, January 1915.

spread commitment to the Harris faith shown in the Dabou area, the Administrateur decided to be cautious in disturbing the churches, lest too much public unrest be provoked.[1]

During February 1915 the Cercle, especially in the Agboville region, was overawed by the presence of the 5th Senegalese Tirailleurs, and with their support the Chefs de Poste of Dabou, Agboville, Adzopé, and Alepé toured their areas to destroy churches, relocate villages on the main roads, and to give the coup de grâce to "the new religion, which was no more than a means of opposing our authority."[2] The Chef de Poste at Dabou made a point of searching among the Abidji villages for any Abbeys who had come to the "false prophets" there; he found some of them at Yakessé, where Djibi (he believed) was accepting their money in return for baptizing them. Djibi fled into the bush as the officer approached; the latter burned down the church on Sunday evening (7 February) and Djibi was caught and carried to Dabou to be tried. The same officer found campements around Yassap and Orbaff where groups of Abbeys had been staying while awaiting baptism, and these he destroyed. He lectured the villagers wherever he went on the folly of supporting the "prophets" with their money, and though he did not forbid them to hold services, he ordered them not to pay those leading such services.[3] This

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[1] Abid. X-46-26, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, January 1915, comments by Administrateur.

[2] Abid. X-46-26, Report of Chef de Poste, Agboville, February 1915, and comments by Administrateur.

[3] Abid. X-46-26, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, February 1915.

officer felt that the new religion had less hold on the Abidjis than among the Adjoukrous and Alladians, and in some villages (such as Ababou and Bécédi) the chiefs had closed the churches and forbidden services as soon as they heard of the arrest of Harris. They declared that they wanted no palavers with the Administration.[1]

When the same Chef de Poste toured the Alladian Coast in March, collecting taxes from the scattered population and burning the illegal hamlets, he found two or even three pastors in every village and felt compelled to suppress them everywhere, because they had assumed a commanding place in village affairs. On the mainland he found an excuse to destroy the church in the large Adjoukrou centre of Débrimou on the complaint of one of the elders, Katakre, that it was causing dissension among the inhabitants.[2]

If the Administration had wished, they might have been able to control the new religion by placing it firmly in the hands of the Catholic missionaries, depleted though the number of Fathers was by the obligation of mobilization. The official view, however, continued to be opposed to the work of the Catholic Church. This was made very clear in a short exchange between the Administrateur of the Cercle des Lagunes and the Lieutenant-Governor in June 1915. On 20 June the Administrateur forwarded the request of the two villages, Anoumabo and Abobo-

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1 Abid. X-46-26, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, February 1915.

2 Abid. X-46-26, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, March 1915.

Doumé (both facing Abidjan across the lagoon and today in its suburbs) for permission to build a church in durable materials to be handed over to the missionaries for Catholic worship. This was a test case, and was so regarded by the Administration. It was decided to discourage the trend unequivocally; the Troisième Bureau which advised on religious matters commented:

> The natives would do better to employ their time and money in planting cocoa instead of buying, probably from Mooussou,[1] expensive bricks to construct a church as a free gift to the Mission. The Mission would doubly profit from that.[2]

The Lieutenant-Governor's official advice was:

> Tell the villagers they can easily cross over to Abidjan on Sundays to attend church there--it would be a chance for them to have an excellent Sunday stroll.[3]

The religious suppression thus undertaken was ostensibly in the interests of the war effort. Applied against both Catholic and Methodist evangelists, it forced people to look for spiritual authority outside of organized Christianity and in direct defiance of the Government. Ultimately, the Government was to regret this, but in the summer of 1915 it was complacently assured of the complete eclipse of the new faith. In actual fact it was being practised in secret, and where the churches were destroyed, people simply met for their services somewhere else. In October 1915 there were rumours from the Adzopé area that

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1 At Mooussou, near Bassam, the Catholic Fathers ran a flourishing brickyard.

2 Abid. X-46-26, Correspondence: 3e Bureau to Lieutenant-Governor, 26 June 1915.

3 Abid. X-46-26, Correspondence: Lieutenant-Governor to Administrateur, Cercle des Lagunes, 29 June 1915.

disciples of Harris were active and that churches were being rebuilt,[1] while at Dabou in November "a Sierra Leonean" who tried to revive the Harris religion was put in prison.[2] In the region of Jacqueville, as the Chef de Poste discovered when he went over in December to distribute school prizes, people were actively trying to revive their churches. The Chef de Poste promised to watch them and arrest them when necessary.[3]

In the Cercle d'Assinie events were following a different course. Religious suppression, coupled with political unrest, and the proximity of a refuge with kindred peoples in the Gold Coast, led to serious migrations. When the news of the arrest of Harris reached the Agnis of Sanwi, and dashed their expectations that he would win better conditions for them, there was a sizable exodus over the frontier. This took place in January 1915, as the taxes became due, but it had other causes, such as a serious quarrel between the leading Protestants and the "King," Kadia Kassi.[4] An inquiry by the Chef de Poste showed that economically the Canton of Krinjabo was in a desperate economic situation. Kadia Kassi was accused of not distributing money he had received in payment of timber rights and was extremely unpopular. Although people were deep in debt, they refused to produce palm oil and

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1 Abid. X-46-26, Report of Chef de Poste, Adzopé, October 1915.

2 Abid. X-46-26, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, November 1915.

3 Abid. X-46-26, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, December 1915.

4 Abid. X-27-14, Report of Chef de Poste, Aboisso, January 1915, and comment of Administrateur.

the few cocoa-farmers refused to sell their produce on the grounds that prices were too low.[1]

Administrateur Bru, despite his analysis in December 1914 of the manner in which the French had betrayed the best interests of the Agnis, was perhaps not the man to inspire confidence in French intentions. He no doubt revealed by his attitude his suspicion of some secret understanding between the British officials across the frontier and the people of his Cercle. He agreed with the Chef de Poste at Aboisso who reported that "a current of secret propaganda emanates from the neighbouring colony," and was himself convinced that the District Commissioner at Half Assinie was offering large sums of money to emigrés from Krinjabo if they would make plantations in his district.[2]

The essential point is that the new religion was used by the Agnis of Sanwi as a bond solidifying their opposition to the French Administration and all its works: its attempts to make them exploit their resources for the benefit of commerce, its taxing and recruiting activities which were a violation of the original treaties of protection, and its contempt for native institutions. Many of those who went over the border settled there permanently. In 1916 there was a new exodus when it was incautiously let slip that sixty men were going to be con-

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[1] The commercial slump was a consequence of the war. Tauxier, op. cit., pp. 190-2.

[2] Abid. X-27-14, Report of Chef de Poste, Aboisso, February 1915.

scripted from the Cercle. Aboisso was deserted at once and when Bru called all the chiefs together there, they met beforehand with the King of Krinjabo and instead of accepting quotas, as Bru expected, they decided not to co-operate at all. On 26 December 1916 they too went into the Gold Coast with their wives, families, and supporters, leaving the Cercle more than half empty of its inhabitants.[1]

Methodist leaders in Britain believed that the Agnis had emigrated because of their religious convictions and believed, as they publicly said at their May meetings in 1915, that the return of a large number of exiles to Krinjabo earlier that year was on the promise of the Administrateur that the church would be rebuilt at Government expense.[2] In fact, no such condition was agreed to, nor does religious freedom appear to have been a serious issue in subsequent efforts to bring back later groups of exiles. When in 1917 the chiefs, rebuffed in their attempt to put their country under British protection, submitted the conditions upon which they would return, these were in effect a demand that the laws of the Ivory Coast should not apply to Sanwi, for they wanted no taxes, no forced labour, no recruitment, and no alienation of the forest lands.[3] But they did not request any religious concessions. In June 1918 the Agni emigrés agreed to return under a complete amnesty,

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1 Tauxier, op. cit., p. 192.

2 M.M.S.-G.C., Martin to Goudie, 4 September 1915.

3 Tauxier, op. cit., p. 193.

and although there was still a period of tension, French power was ultimately confirmed and a King and elders more friendly to the Administration were soon put in control.

It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the Agnis accepted the baptism of Harris as a vehicle for embarrassing and alarming the French, and as a source of internal strength and unity. They were not prepared to use it for the changing and modernizing of their society; they made no effort to work the six days before resting the seventh, nor does it appear that public and private hygiene, or public morals, improved; education was not sought, and society as a whole was not motivated positively. Rather, the attempt was made to turn the clock back. The rumours that Great Britain would annex the region (in 1917 the Agnis invited the British in the Gold Coast to do so[1]) and that Harris was having the head tax lowered or even abolished were an indication that Agni sentiment was looking to the political past, not to a spiritually refurbished present. The very rivalry between Protestant and Catholic suggests a political contest, not a spiritual one. Even though the Catholic converts had opted to be "French," hoping perhaps to wring some advantage from the Administration, they too fled to the Gold Coast in large numbers when no such advantage appeared.

The subsequent religious history of this region is of little interest, indicating the failure of Harris to arouse a lasting spiritual response among the Sanwi peoples.

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[1] Tauxier, op. cit., p. 193.

In the Gold Coast during this period the Christian evangelists were able to work freely among the Harris converts, yet they were unable to win them completely. A church which came on the scene unexpectedly and gained a following for orthodox Christianity was the Church of England, represented in the colony by the "English Church Mission" of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. This Mission profited from the efforts of John Swatson.

Swatson was born at Beyin and when an old man, he retired from a commercial career in Nigeria to become in 1912 and 1913 the Methodist agent at Aboisso.[1] He became a fanatical follower of Harris, who consecrated him as his "bishop"[2] and apostle for Sanwi and the frontier area of the Ivory Coast and the Gold Coast. Swatson returned to Aboisso but then continued along the caravan route north and wandered into British territory.[3] During the next few years he preached to the Sefwis, Aowins, and Denkyeras and his efforts brought him into conflict with Chiefs and District Commissioners who viewed the destruction of the private and public fetishes as tending to dissolve all moral sanctions.[4]

The congregations Swatson established required more direction than he could provide, while the catechists he recruited soon became

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1 The Gold Coast Annual, 1912 and 1913, op. cit.

2 Marty, op. cit., p. 17.

3 Abid. X-27-14, Report of Chef de Poste, Aboisso, December 1914, comments by Administrateur.

4 Accra, Conf. 7/15, District Commissioner, Sefwi, to Commissioner, Western Province, 24 March 1915.

dissatisfied with their financial prospects. The English Church Mission was already interested in the unorganized congregations of the "Christ Church Mission - Beyin," which were apparently set up by Swatson on an Anglican rather than a Methodist pattern. Soon after Easter 1916 Swatson visited Archdeacon G.W. Morrison at Kumasi and offered him the fruit of his labours. Morrison toured the area and was warmly received by the converts during a period of three weeks,[1] and in June Swatson and his workers were officially appointed as Anglican agents.[2] Swatson soon settled at his old home, Beyin, where he helped translate the Prayer Book and hymns into Nzima, and drew many Methodists and Catholics into his large congregation. In the area he evangelized the Anglicans built wisely on his foundations. His baptism was accepted as valid and Bishop O'Rorke confirmed the converts in due course. Polygamists were accepted as adherents and were not denied full Christian burial. The work lived, and the cocoa farms made in 1916 as an endowment for the churches are still supporting many of them.[3]

In Nzimaland itself many Harris converts joined strange new cults in which the traditional religious ideas and practices of the area were blended with the Christian ideas derived from Harris. Al-

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[1] Archdeacon G.W. Morrison's Report of 30 June 1916, in Missionary Reports 1916, S.P.G. Archives, London.

[2] Accra, Quarterly Reports 1916, Bishop of Accra to Commissioner, Western Province, 27 June 1916.

[3] Oral evidence of Canon C.H. Elliott, Cape Coast, September 1963.

though its leaders honoured the Bible, they were illiterate and not able to refer to it directly. The cults which they developed were, in the eyes of the missionaries, a "bastard type of Christianity ... infinitely worse than raw heathenism."[1] The chief figure in this syncretistic faith was Grace Thannie or Tani, who is said to have been a fetish priestess at Kristan Eikwe up to the time Harris arrived. She was baptized by the Prophet at Axim, but showed an unusually stubborn evil spirit. Accounts differ as to the degree of success Harris had with her, but apparently she joined his entourage because he did not feel she was fit to be left on her own. When he returned to the Ivory Coast, she went too, clad in a white robe and carrying a calabash and joining the two Liberian women in leading his services.

When Harris was expelled from the Ivory Coast, Grace Thannie returned to Nzima. She called herself Madam Harris Grace Thannie and tried in some way to carry on Harris's work. She and her followers, "prophets" and "prophetesses," dressed in white, shook beaded calabashes and sang as well as they could the Kru hymns Harris had introduced. Their aim was the exorcism of evil spirits, which was to them the meaningful part of the Prophet Harris's work. Naturally, they charged clients fees for their services.[2]

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[1] M.M.S.-G.C., Witter to Thompson, 4 June 1923.

[2] Cape Coast, C 733, Report on Harris Sect by A.Q. Kyiamah, submitted 6 February 1940.

Madam Thannie called her church "The Church of William Waddy Harris, and his Twelve Apostles." She claimed that it knew no boundaries of race or tribe, but believed "in God's Mercy and the beneficial influence of His Holy Word." Through their unbounded faith in God Almighty, her priests effected miraculous cures and performed wonders. They did not claim, she assured the authorities, to be able to exorcise witches, nor detect witchcraft, nor to practise Black Magic in any form themselves.[1] It can be assumed that in describing her religion she put a Christian gloss on it which may not have been deserved.

Within a few years of the beginning of the sect, water carrying began to play a most important part in the ritual of exorcism and healing. Presumably, the idea developed from Harris's practice of baptism. It formed part of the healing service which soon became the major part of Thannie's work. The sick held pans of water on their heads while the singing of the Kru songs and the clashing of the beaded calabashes set up a rhythm which sooner or later sent them into a trance or state of possession. In this they swayed or even danced feebly, splashing water out of the basin over themselves. When they became quiet again the water remaining was carefully taken off and used as a personal medicine to be applied both internally and externally.

It seems likely that the idea prompting this was that an angel of healing descended during the trance and transformed the water into

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[1] Cape Coast, C 733, Petition from Madam Harris Grace Thannie of Christen, Axim, 17 January 1940.

holy water. Early in the sect's existence there was a belief that the water became salty as it became holy.[1]

Various imitators of Grace Thannie sprang up in Nzimaland and even east of Axim. At some time she joined forces with another convert of the Prophet Harris called John Nachabah (or Nakaba). He made his headquarters at Essuawah, near Tarkwa, and later, when he had built up an organization, claimed to be "Founder and General Chairman of the 12 Apostles Mission."[2] The present widespread Church of the Twelve Apostles regards these two as the "Pioneers" who carried on the work of the "founder," W.W. Harris.[3] By the church's own admission, these "pioneers" were illiterate and it was only through the assistance of more educated leaders, some of them formerly pastors in other churches, that a widespread network of congregations and some sort of centralized church government was built up.[4]

Besides this organization, many individual prophets and prophetesses evidently rose and flourished for a time. One interesting group was formed at Alluapokeh, not far from the town where the infant Kwame Nkrumah was learning the rudiments of the Catholic faith. It was founded by Cudjoe Monnor, a former Catholic who was able to give "Power"

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1 Cape Coast, C 733, Report by Kyiamah.

2 Cape Coast, C 733, Letter from John Nachabah to Chief Commissioner, Cape Coast, 25 August 1947.

3 An official almanac of the Twelve Apostles Church (seen in 1963).

4 Baëta, op. cit., pp. 9-27.

to suppliants, who claimed to cure with holy water and prayer, and who built up a chain of congregations probably second only to the Church of the Twelve Apostles. Known originally as Kagyeletpeh or the Healing Power Church, it was renamed, under Cudjoe's son, St. Anthony's Healing Power Church.[1]

It is clear from these developments that the Nzima converts did not respond completely to the message of the orthodox and European-centred churches. Many reverted to traditional practices again and witchcraft, which had seemed for a time to be uprooted, reappeared. This tendency, in an area where the Methodists and Roman Catholics already had a firm footing, could not have been anticipated in 1914, when Harris ordered his converts to join one church or the other. In some cases the religion offered by the churches was not to the taste of the converts; these became followers of the syncretist groups described above. Many others were never really contacted by the churches, and though sometimes they were nominal Christians, they were very ignorant ones.

On the Methodist side there were definite factors weakening the mobilization of all its resources for the task. When, six years later, another Prophet, Sampson Oppong, appeared in Ashanti, the English missionaries there utilized the most modern forms of transport to control

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[1] Oral evidence of Cudjoe Monnor II at Alluapokeh, April 1964.

it and built up a large Methodist community.[1] Not only were there no modern forms of transport available in Nzimaland at the time, there were no English missionaries either. The one African minister in the Circuit had only a handful of trained assistants, and the wonder is that he accomplished as much as he did. The deployment of a larger number of both African and European clergy would have borne permanent fruit. One factor making it difficult to provide European missionaries was the war, but another was present in the Synod politics of the Methodist Church in the Gold Coast.

This Synod was independent of the British "Mother Church" in all but the admission of candidates to the ordained ministry. The missionaries, who were members of the Synod, held in addition an annual district meeting to discuss matters of importance to themselves. This meeting suggested to the Synod where missionaries might be stationed, but its exclusiveness made the African clergy suspicious of its power and motives.[2] In 1915 it became known that these meetings would acquire a formal character under the new title of "Local Committee." It seemed to the native clergy that this disguised a move to rob them of power and give it to the Europeans, a manoeuvre already successfully completed in

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[1] G.M. Haliburton, "The Calling of a Prophet: Sampson Oppong," The Bulletin of the Society for African Church History, II, December 1965, is a recent description of this movement.

[2] F.L. Bartels, The Roots of Ghana Methodism, Cambridge, 1965, p. 50.

the Colonial Administration.[1]

The Synod which met 13-26 February 1915 had a consideration of the Harris Movement as part of its business, and had data on its progress over a six-month period. The Rev. C.W. Armstrong had made the first official report while on a tour of inspection in Axim on 2 August 1914, and this had been forwarded to London immediately by the District Chairman, Rev. William R. Griffin. The report described the impossibility of supplying trained workers outside the large towns. Local Preachers were, however, appointed for each congregation. From the beginning, the Church was accepting gifts of land accompanied by proper deeds. Harris's baptism was not accepted as valid; polygamists were turned away, and no one received the Methodist baptism until he had memorized the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, as well as satisfying the Church's conditions of behaviour. Once baptized, the candidate was on trial for a year before being admitted to full membership.[2]

When this report had reached London, Rev. William Goudie, Secretary for West Africa, had been extremely interested. He demanded more details for use in publicity and fund-raising,[3] and came to the

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1 C. Fyfe, A History of Sierra Leone, London, 1962, p. 615. However, there were some efforts about this time to reverse the trend. The International Review of Missions, VI, 21 January 1917, p. 44, noted that six new posts were being created in the Gold Coast medical service expressly for Africans, giving them nearly 20 of the 250 public medical appointments.

2 M.M.S.-G.C., Armstrong to Griffin, 2 August 1914.

3 M.M.S.-G.C., Goudie to Armstrong, 11 September 1914.

Gold Coast to attend the Synod.

Although the urgent needs of the Axim Circuit were discussed, they were met only by the increased provision of an Assistant Minister (S.C. Dodd) and three District Agents, along with the passing of a resolution recognizing the opportunities and responsibilities with which the Harris Movement faced the Church. In actual fact, Goudie's presence had done more to distract interest from Apollonia than to fix it. At the meeting of the European missionaries, Goudie had exchanged hot words with District Chairman Griffin, and the latter had immediately submitted his resignation. Both inside and outside the Synod it was assumed that Griffin had been attacked because he followed a policy of placing Africans in positions of church leadership,[1] a policy which, it was believed, certain young missionaries and Goudie himself opposed.

The resignation was blown up to crisis proportions; both the Synod and the Aborigines Rights Protection Society begged the Missionary Committee in London to reject it. When no notice was taken, the Gold Coast Leader suggested that if this meant Europeans must always supervise the affairs of the Methodist Church, then the Committee had forfeited the loyalty of Africans and the Synod might well declare its independence of British Methodism.[2]

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1 The Gold Coast Leader, 13 March 1915.

2 The Gold Coast Leader, 15 May 1915.

Suspicions of Goudie's intentions had been strengthened by his announcement that henceforth the missionaries would meet as an officially recognized "Local Committee," in line with the practice in other mission fields. Despite attempts at reassurance, the suspicion remained that this Committee would be the real governing body of the Church. These fears were exacerbated by misunderstanding a sentence Goudie was reported as using when addressing the "May Meetings" of the Missionary Society on his return to England. In describing the effect of the Prophet Harris, he appealed to his audience

> ... so to support this wonderful movement that the Sacrament of Baptism and the Lord's Supper should never, through lack of dignity occasioned by an insufficiency of trained missionaries, degenerate into something little better than a fetish.[1]

Goudie was actually pleading for men to go and help the understaffed African clergy, but it was taken by them, and particularly by Bruce, who was in the most crucial spot, as an attack on their orthodoxy and competence.[2] They had already made up their minds to have no missionaries at stations south of Kumasi (except in educational and training institutions) and this determination stiffened. If any volunteers had come forward at Goudie's invitation, it would have made an embarrassing situation. As it turned out, the mass movement remained completely in African hands, and in after years, it was felt in London

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[1] The Methodist Recorder, 6 May 1915.

[2] M.M.S.-G.C., Bruce to Goudie, 2 June 1915; also, "Appeal" from the African Clergy of the Gold Coast to the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, 5 June 1915.

that in excluding the missionaries and trying to "go it alone" Gold Coast Methodism had made a serious error.[1]

Despite strains at the Synod of 1916,[2] there was no secession by the Gold Coast Methodists, and in the next few years the wound healed. During that time there was no reason to be ashamed of Bruce's success in Axim and Apollonia. Methodist membership climbed from 961 full members, 1,037 on trial, and 4,132 catechumens at the end of 1914[3] to 2,387 full members, 1,524 on trial, and 3,048 catechumens in 1915[4] and to 3,049 full members, 3,641 on trial, and 2,079 catechumens at the end of 1916,[5] by which time the decline in catechumens suggests that the Church had attracted the majority of potential converts.

The Synod of 1917 replaced Bruce by James B. Graham, who remained at Axim until 1922. During his years the hollowness of much of the Methodist achievement became evident. John Swatson's church at Beyin had drawn away many Methodists from that area, and even where there were no rivals, the shortages of staff and the defections of unworthy agents had harmed the work. On Armstrong's tour of the area in May 1916 he had found that many of the congregations "on trial" did not

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1 A.E. Southon, Gold Coast Methodism, London, 1934, p. 145.

2 M.M.S.-G.C., Maude to Goudie, 26 February 1916.

3 Min. G.C.S. 1915.

4 Min. G.C.S. 1916.

5 Min. G.C.S. 1917.

understand any of the "doctrines, duties and privileges of the Christian Religion."[1]

The Methodist community in the Ivory Coast, which was governed by the Gold Coast Synod, was not able, officially, to do as effective a job with the Harris converts as Bruce and his assistants in the Axim Circuit. Yet indirectly, more effectively perhaps for being unofficial, they greatly influenced the converts in the Ivory Coast and laid the basis for a future Methodism amongst them.

The Church had begun among the English-speaking Africans at Grand Bassam in 1896, under the lead of John A. Bonney, a tailor. Later on the work was annexed by the Dixcove Circuit, which put Bonney in charge as Lay Agent. Land and buildings were donated at Bassam by the Hon. John Mensah Sarbah of the Gold Coast, and one of the buildings became the first church.[2] From about 1909[3] the work was under the Superintendant Ministers of the Axim Circuit, and it grew to include congregations at Aboisso and Assinie. Few if any of the members were Ivoirians.

The Methodist Synod of 1914 created a new circuit under Bassam with the name "Ivory Coast Mission," and it was assigned an English missionary, H.G. Martin, and an Assistant African Minister, J.C. Koomson,

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1 M.M.S.-G.C., Armstrong to Goudie, 26 June 1916.

2 M.M.S.-G.C., "Report on the Ivory Coast" by H.G. Martin, 2 July 1916. (He cites as a source Rev. J. Reynolds, African minister.)

3 Bartels, op. cit., p. 155.

who had already been at Bassam as District Agent.[1] Martin arrived from England in September 1914, but though he saw the effects of the work of Harris, he apparently did not meet the Prophet or show any curiousity about his methods. He later reported with approval that

> ... many young men who had come from British districts and had received an elementary Christian training were employed by the people to minister in these churches and give religious instruction ...[2]

Despite the fact that Goudie, during his visit in 1915, came to Bassam with Martin (they slogged on foot along the sandy beach from Half Assinie[3]) the work Harris had accomplished in the Ivory Coast continued to be thought of as inferior to that in Apollonia, and since Martin was given little opportunity to explore it for himself, this impression was not dissipated for nearly ten years. Following the arrest of Harris and the suppression of his churches, the Government had restricted Martin's movements. In his report to the 1915 Synod he said that "patience, tact and judgment" were called for, and could only hope that "someday" permission would be granted for missionary work in the villages.[4]

The centres in which faithful Methodists could be found in 1914, according to the subscription lists, were, besides Grand Bassam,

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1 The Gold Coast Annual, 1914, op. cit.

2 M.M.S.-G.C., "Report on the Ivory Coast" by H.G. Martin, 2 July 1916.

3 M.M.S.-G.C., Goudie to Martin, 10 January 1916.

4 The Gold Coast Annual, 1915, op. cit.

Assinie, Aboisso, Abidjan, Bingerville, and Half Jack,[1] while stations planned for the coming year included Moaussou, Bonoua, Krinjabo, Vietri, and Alepé. The adherents at these places were certainly native Harris converts.

After returning from the 1915 Synod, Martin was able to gain an interview with the Lieutenant-Governor and, though he was forbidden to station agents in the villages, he was given leave to go himself and preach in those villages where chapels had been built. Reporting this, he was forced to admit that

> ... those men who have been going about preaching to the people and taking money from them on their own account, have not helped my work; this irregular evangelism has encouraged the Government to adopt repressive measures and to regard Protestant Missionary work ... with suspicion ...[2]

In March Martin toured the Assinie-Aboisso area and made his peace with the offended Chef de Poste at Aboisso. While promising that Wesleyan preachers would not stir up trouble,[3] he requested permission to station one at Krinjabo. He had to submit his request to the Governor, and as he feared, it was rejected. At the same time all Catholic and Protestant missionary work was prohibited in the district with the exception of Aboisso itself. Martin felt the Government's fears were groundless, and said that the destruction of churches and scattering

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1 The Gold Coast Annual, 1915, op. cit.

2 M.M.S.-G.C., Martin to Goudie, 3 May 1915.

3 Abid. X-27-14, Report of Chef de Poste, Aboisso, March 1915.

of catechists, "Protestant, but not under our control, reflects little credit on French Colonial Administration."[1]

Goudie, on his return to London, had thought of going to the Colonial Office to ask them to take up the suppression of missionary work with Paris or with the Ivory Coast Government, but in the end he decided the time was not ripe, and he could only counsel patience until it was.[2]

The 1916 Synod proposed no changes in the Ivory Coast Mission, ignoring, in his absence, Martin's suggestion that Half Assinie become its headquarters and an educational centre.[3] A few months later Martin went home and concluded his Ivory Coast service with a report on the situation and his recommendations. He believed that despite Government opposition, the Church was achieving progress. The most urgent necessity was a centre for the education of the children, and this the Government would not allow. He recommended that a French-speaking European missionary be sent out to supervise the Mission, with a French-speaking African teacher to start an elementary day school. He also urged negotiations with the Government in Paris for permission to station evangelists in the villages and towns as desired by the inhabitants, to build churches there, and to open day schools for the

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1 M.M.S.-G.C., "Report on the Ivory Coast" by H.G. Martin, 2 July 1916.

2 M.M.S.-G.C., Goudie to Martin, 25 June 1915.

3 M.M.S.-G.C., Martin to Goudie, 4 September 1915.

Protestant children.[1]

When Martin's successor, Edmund C. Horler, arrived at Grand Bassam he was told he could preach and visit only in the town. He secured an interview with the Lieutenant-Governor, who firmly refused to permit him to evangelize, on the grounds that it was the missionaries who were causing political trouble and confusion among the natives.

> No amount of explanation could convince him that natives who were good Christians could not fail to be better citizens. The final result of the interview was that no Missionary would be allowed to visit any of the villages in the Colony and that I must not even visit the stations we have already in existence.[2]

The Governor recapitulated his arguments in a letter. He stressed the damage which preaching at large would do to the war effort by deflecting the minds of the inhabitants from their duty. Under the circumstances, Horler had to send away without hope the many village deputations who came to welcome him and request his aid in rebuilding their churches and giving them instruction.[3] Since he was useless at Bassam, the Synod of 1917 decided to use his services in the Gold Coast, and he returned to the Ivory Coast only to report his departure to his flock there.[4]

Horler spent the next three years exploring the region along the Tano River and in the Aowin and Wassaw Districts of the Gold Coast.

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1 M.M.S.-G.C., "Report on the Ivory Coast" by H.G. Martin, 2 July 1916.

2 Min. G.C.S. 1917.

3 Min. G.C.S. 1917.

4 "A Minute Book of the Quarterly Meeting of the Wesleyan Methodist Society, Grand Bassam, (1916-1923)."

He found ignorant catechists carrying on Methodist work of a very low order, in which the collection of Class Dues played the largest part.[1] He found certain native kings hostile to the spread of Christianity; the Omanhene of Enchi was especially difficult, for he said the Christians could not keep goats, as Horler had suggested, because it offended "the Tanor Fetish," while the "King's Fetish" was spoiled if people worked on Tuesdays and Saturdays.[2]

In 1918 Horler took charge of this area which, as the "Apollonia Mission," was made an independent circuit. He hoped to establish its headquarters at Enchi, but this was never done. Horler was not able to return after his furlough in 1920, while Goudie had retired in September 1919, and after several drifting years, the "Apollonia Mission" was dissolved as a failure.

There are probably no detailed figures on the Methodist community and the other groups in this region which can be reliably used to document the pessimistic conclusions of the missionaries. However, the record of full members in the Axim Circuit (including the Apollonia Mission) indicates a curve reaching its apogee in 1921. In 1913, before Harris came, there were 633 full members. In 1915 there were 2,387; in 1917, 3,405; in 1919, 4,138, and in 1921, 4,737. This figure rapidly declined to 2,959 in 1924, and continued to decline

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1 M.M.S.-G.C., Horler to Goudie, 7 November 1917.

2 M.M.S.-G.C., Horler to Goudie, 19 April 1919.

generally thereafter.[1] By that time, no doubt, the water-carrying cults were making serious inroads into Methodist ranks.

Although in the Ivory Coast during the war years and after the Government had continued its policy of religious suppression, the spiritual life of the people continued, on the new lines laid down by Harris and his disciples. For the most part, its manifestations never came to the notice of the Administration, since among the groups changed most completely the new emphasis on work, obedience to authority, and other constructive rules given by Harris matched the expectations of the Administrateurs. Amongst some other groups, however, as with the Agnis of Sanwi, the strength of the new practices showed itself in opposition to the Government. The demands of war increased the pressure on the whole population to produce useful crops,[2] and in order to control such groups as the Attiés more effectively, there was no let-up in the policy of grouping them in large communities under energetic young chiefs appointed by the Administration.[3] The Attiés, like the Abbeys, Agnis, and others who could be reached from the railway line, were not as difficult to control as those in the depths of the forests in the east and west.

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[1] Wesleyan Methodist Church, Minutes of Conference, London, 1914-25.

[2] Abid. I-24-280, "Circulaires du Governeur" contain many telegrams sent to the Cercles demanding the collection of products needed for the national defence, e.g., 24 January 1917, "mais, capock, bois;" 3 February, cereals, beans, tanning materials; 18 February, foods for human and animal consumption including "mais, mil, paddy, sorgho." On 10 April the planting of the castor oil plant was urged, and on 16 April, of cotton.

[3] Abid. X-46-26, Report of Administrateur, Cercle des Lagunes, 4th quarter, 1915.

Gabriel Angoulvant's La Pacification de la Côte d'Ivoire, when it was published in Paris in 1916, seemed to mark the successful and final suppression of all resistance to France in the colony, but in fact there were many areas where control was weak and liable to be defied. In the Cercles bordering the Gold Coast and Liberia the population could and did simply cross the frontier, while the Apollonians living all along the coast stole away by canoe, when any great effort was demanded of them.

In the Dida country, in the forest behind Grand Lahou, flight was not feasible but opposition and hostility to the Administration increased as the recruitment was pressed. As demands for agricultural produce became heavier, rebellion actually broke out, despite the presence of a strong squad of Tirailleurs in the area. It was suppressed by the end of the year (1917) after 80 rebels had been killed.[1] The Administration was worried by the discovery that four Dida groups ordinarily hostile to each other, the Latrouhin, Dagodou, Guegoko, and Benga, should have united with such solidarity in this defiance. It was suggested by the officials in touch with them that their religion, evolved from the teachings of the Prophet Harris, was the explanation. The Lieutenant-Governor, naturally indignant that this had been permitted in defiance of official policy, wanted the churches destroyed and the exercise of the religion utterly suppressed throughout the Cercle de

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[1] Abid. X-39-5, Report of Administrateur, Lahou, 1st quarter 1918.

Lahou.[1] This, however, was impracticable.

Investigation showed that inhabitants of the subdivision of Lakota had gone to Lahou to be baptized in May and June 1915, though stories of the Prophet Harris's powers had been circulating for some time before that. Soon after a clerk "Por" appeared and proceeded to baptize throughout the region. Por appointed two religious leaders for each community from among the most intelligent and eloquent of the young men.[2] He taught that goodness was rewarded and evil punished in the next world; that theft, adultery, and over-indulgence in alcohol (but not palm wine) were wrong. From him the Didas learned to observe a strict Sabbath rest, to help their co-religionists, and, most harmful to French authority, the belief that all men, black and white, were equal, and therefore they ought not to obey the French.[3] When the villagers of Soulirelilié were fined by the Administrateur they were a long time in paying it. They declared:

> Religion forbids us to take what belongs to others; there is thus no reason why the white man should oblige us to give him money which does not belong to him.[4]

The Dida congregations looked to a leader at Lahou, and this leader was suspected by the Chef de Poste at Lakota of inspiring the

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[1] Abid. X-39-5, Report of Chef de Poste, Lakota, 4th quarter 1917, and comments of Administrateur and Lieutenant-Governor.

[2] Abid. X-39-5, Report of Chef de Poste, Lakota, May 1918.

[3] Abid. X-39-5, Report of Chef de Poste, Lakota, May 1918.

[4] Abid. X-39-5, Report of Chef de Poste, Divo, 4th quarter 1918.

co-operative resistance met by the French. Administrateur Corbière, however, dismissed this theory as a myth. After all, in 1910 and in 1912, before Harris had come, the Didas had shown a united front of hostility. Corbière was inclined to try to use the new faith to further the Administration's aims.[1] In his political report at the end of 1918 he made this suggestion:

> The new religion which has penetrated the most remote villages and which it would be out of the question to stop can also have a happy moral influence on making certain superstitions and such practices as trial by poison disappear. Numerous villages already baptized demand insistently that they be sent a 'prophet' to instruct them better in the precepts of religion for which they feel a need. A native instructor, devoted to our cause, could, by going about the country and discussing again with the natives the reforms they rejected when coming from us, grounding them this time on religion, make them accept a few moral and hygienic principles. He could also obtain satisfactory results in the social, economic and political aspects of their thinking.[2]

Corbière suggested that the Governor locate such an agent, and that he be paid the salary going to one or even both of the political agents at Lakota, whose insignificant services might be dispensed with at no inconvenience.

There is no record of Corbière's suggestion being acted upon, but it may have been, for some years later the Methodist missionaries reported hearing that a political officer had sent a Harris preacher to baptize--by force if necessary--all the people in his district, and

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[1] Abid. X-39-5, Report of Chef de Poste, Lakota, May 1918, and comments of Administrateur.

[2] Abid. X-39-5, Political Report for Grand Lahou, 4th quarter 1918.

there had been no opposition to him.[1]

Corbière apparently never persecuted the followers of Harris in his Cercle, despite the policy at Bingerville. In 1916 he had noted the commandments of the new religion in a paper on "Coutumes Brignans"[2] with no suggestion that he disapproved of them, and it seems that he permitted it to flourish unmolested in the coastal towns and inland. In a report at the end of his four years at Lahou, he spoke of the importance of the new religion which "plays an increasingly greater role in the coastal area and little by little penetrates to the northern limits of the Cercle." Only the young, he said, were dissatisfied with this religion and sought to become Catholic or to join the "Reformed Christian Church" of the English colonies.[3]

Although in speaking of Lozoua, he mentioned a demand there for a government school, which he supported, because

> it would aid us in combating the influence of the English shopkeepers in whose places the inhabitants send their children to work and where they learn the rudiments of the English tongue[4]

he did not mention the church there. It must have been quite influential in spreading a knowledge of English, because for some years its services were in that tongue. Among the clerks who led it were Macaulay (from

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[1] W.J. Platt, "The Ivory Coast Today," The Foreign Field, XXIII, July 1927, p. 228.

[2] Grivot, op. cit., p. 84.

[3] Abid. X-39-5, "Report de Fin de Gestion, Septembre 1914-Mars 1918," by Administrateur Corbière.

[4] Abid. X-39-5, Political Report for Grand Lahou, 4th quarter 1918.

Freetown), Thomas (Bathurst), and Hanson (the Gold Coast), and later A.E.M. Brown was an active teacher until he was transferred to Fresco in 1920.[1]

In the beginning this church called itself "Methodist," but Thomas brought dissension when he said, "The French are masters here, so why speak English?" and he tried to teach the people to be French and Catholic. He tried to get French Bibles and he instructed people to cross themselves at noon and at six in the evening, when the church bell sounded. When Brown came to Lozoua he opposed these practices, since Harris was not a Catholic. On the other hand, some of the people who had been to Abidjan agreed that there was only a Catholic Church there, and so the converts split into two groups. Brown worked with the Protestant group, as did Macaulay and Hanson. They had English Bibles and taught from them in English.

When Brown was transferred, he left direction of the congregation in the hands of Samuel Aoto, whom he had taught to speak and read English, along with all the others who attended the Sunday School. Possibly Brown was transferred because of this, for it is said that the manager of King's at Lahou was warned by the Commandant that his clerk at Lozoua was teaching English instead of minding his own business. When Aoto had taken over, he was summoned to Lahou and questioned: "You are a Gold Coast man!" "No, Sir, I am from Lozoua." "If you are

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[1] Oral evidence of old men at Lozoua, August 1963.

not from the Gold Coast, how is it that you know and teach English?" Aoto replied, "I don't teach English but in Church I look in the Bible and tell them the words I see." The Commandant ordered, "From now on you must leave the Bible at home." From this time Aoto studied the message he wished to expound beforehand and spoke it in Church without any book, and people began to try to learn French.[1]

Evidence of the fact that there was nothing illicit in the position of the Harris congregation at Grand Lahou itself is given in the official report of the deaths of two notable figures of the town late in 1918, Gninie, Chief of Lahou, and Akadie, an interpreter. Most of the leading figures of the town were absent from the Chief's funeral in order to attend that of Akadie, who was a man of influence before the coming of Harris but gained more by the fact that he was one of its most ardent promoters and officiants. His influence was apparently such that he dared at times to oppose official policy. The same report states rather strangely that the new Chief, Dagri Blakpa, President of the Sub-divisional Tribunal, "possessed of relatively great political and religious influence" and one who had given firm proof of loyalty to France, would now become religious leader of the Harris religion practised by nearly all the Avikams.[2] The exact significance of this statement is difficult to estimate.

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1 Old men at Lozoua.

2 Abid. X-39-5, Report of Chef de Poste, Lahou, 4th quarter 1918.

It suggests that the Chief of Lahou was automatically leader of the Church. This may have been so in a ceremonial sense, but oral tradition states (as mentioned earlier) that Latta Nandjué, who had interpreted for Harris at Kraffy, was the director of the Church from 1915 until his death in 1931.

The Avikam Church followed the order of service of the Church of England as published in French by the S.P.C.K. At the beginning they used calabashes as Harris had done, but after some time the dancing of the women made Nandjué feel that the services were too much like fetish ceremonies, so he ordered an end to it in all the congregations he ruled.[1]

While these "Harris" churches were developing in the Cercle de Lahou, some of the Alladians, Aizis, and Ebriés in the Cercle des Lagunes were attracted to novel forms of religion by the "prophets" Dô and Yessu. Since the people were impatient for the messengers promised by Harris, they were willing to accept these Liberians for what they claimed to be.

Dô, who came first, insisted on re-baptizing people on the grounds that Harris had been an imposter. He baptized by sprinkling from a small bottle to the accompaniment of blasts on an ivory horn, the noise of calabashes, dancing, and singing. A female attendant

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[1] Old men at Lahou, especially Ledjou N'Drin Gaston, leader of the Église Harriste Biblique. The same witness says that while originally all attended the one Church with the Fantis, the Avikams left it when collection taking was introduced.

carried on her head a rock which was believed to turn all doubters into stone, and a young man carried a locally carved statue representing Jesus Christ.[1]

Dô ordered two prayer days, Friday and Sunday. On Fridays the faithful were to wear blue cloths, on Sunday, white. Confession was made by the whole congregation in unison, loudly crying out their sins, and Dô, after absolving them, gave them communion in the form of a piece of bread with jam and sugar, and a glass of red wine. He taught that there was only one God, Master of all men and all things, that it was necessary to pray without ceasing, to believe only in Him and obey only Him. One could ask anything of God, health, power, abundance, remission of sins, and so forth. The faithful were not to steal, not to drink palm wine (they could drink imported alcohol), not to have more than one wife and not to commit adultery. On the two days of rest they could do no work, not even to obey an order of the Administration.

Dô's rule against polygamy was inflexible, and many divorces took place in the region. He would not allow even the wives of polygamists into his church. He also forbade his followers to mix with Protestants or Catholics.

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[1] Dakar, "Au Sujet Propagande Religieuse dans la Région Abidjan-Dabou," Report of Administrateur L. Bourgine, 28 May 1920. Hereafter cited as "Bourgine's 1st Report."

He was popular among the young men (probably because his insistence on monogamy gave them a chance to marry, since the old men were forced to relinquish their monopoly over the women) and they often left their work to take part in religious services. Even when fear of the authorities led Dô to depart, his churches stayed faithful to his teachings and hostile to those who would not accept him. One change which did take place was in the communion--for reasons of economy, it ceased to include jam and red wine.[1]

Yessu, who had been an illiterate cook in Monrovia up to the age of 23 or 24, followed Dô as a popular prophet, probably late in 1918. He outfitted himself with the usual accessories, taking as his special relic and distinctive sign the tail of a panther, "which incarnated the soul of a woman living in the Swanzie."[2]

He first began preaching in the Dabou area, where he explained to the villagers that he had come from Jerusalem in the belly of a fish called "Captain," which landed him at Coco on the Ebrié Lagoon. His teachings, inconsistent and unreasonable, included:

> Don't smoke pipes, only cigarettes. Don't weep for the dead or your villages will be burnt by fire from Heaven. Don't dress the dead for burial. Use the graveyards as cultivated fields. When people are sick, put them in a hut by themselves, without food or water, and smear their bodies with coconut oil and salt.

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[1] Bourgine's 1st Report.

[2] Dakar, a second instalment of Report of Administrateur L. Bourgine, 21 June 1920.

Drink only imported alcohol. Marry only one woman.[1]

Yessu withdrew when certain men, angry because of his attentions to their wives, reported him to the Administration. In 1919 he re-entered the country from the Gold Coast and carried on his profitable career in the Bassam region, particularly around the fishing village of Azuretti. The people brought him such delicacies as bread, rice, meat, jams, milk, wine, and cigarettes. At Mooussou the preacher allowed him the use of the chapel, and he undertook to destroy the fetishes which had caused the influenza epidemic of 1918, to cure the sick, to provide his followers with an abundance of earthly goods, and to conjure up miraculous draughts of fishes from the abandoned fishing grounds and crops from the untilled fields. His popularity in the Bassam area became immense. He inaugurated an elaborate new ceremony of baptism and expounded new doctrines, partly his own naïve ideas, partly memories of Christian belief. In October 1919 he was arrested and imprisoned at Bassam.

Whereas Dô and Yessu enjoyed a success amongst the least sophisticated villages, a spiritual messenger appeared at about the same time from the Gold Coast whose appeal was to the larger, more progressive, centres. Here, where the faith adapted from Harris was supplemented by the teachings of the Methodist clerks, there yet remained the belief that messengers would come, with the Bible, to bring

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[1] Bourgine's 1st Report. Also, oral evidence of a group of Alladians at Koubé, August 1963.

a more complete instruction.

The Rev. Dr. Mark Christian Hayford briefly seemed to be the man. Brother of Casely Hayford, member of a Fanti family prominent in Church and State, he was the founder of the "Baptist Church Mission and Christian Army of the Gold Coast," an autonomous section of Majola Agbebi's "Native Baptist Union of West Africa." Hayford had been a Methodist minister in 1893 and 1894,[1] but he quarrelled with Methodism and, as a follower of Agbebi, began preaching as a Baptist in Cape Coast in March 1898.[2] From the following year until his death at Bath in 1927 he spent the greater part of his time in Europe and America trying to raise funds for his missionary enterprise. He was not very successful, though he profited from the assistance and advice of such sympathizers as Mary Kingsley and Sir Alfred Jones.

At the time the Prophet Harris was evangelizing in Apollonia, Hayford was in England but he appeared in Axim during 1915 to raise a subscription for starting a secondary school like the one he had opened at Cape Coast. He left two masters in charge, but since after his departure from Axim he sent them no money, the school soon ceased to function.[3]

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[1] Wesleyan Methodist Church , Alphabetical Arrangement of Wesleyan Methodist Ministers, London, 1896, p. 75.

[2] The Year-Book and Report of the Baptist Church Mission and the Christian Army of the Gold Coast, 1914, p. 42.

[3] Father Stauffer's Journal.

He came to the Ivory Coast in July 1919 and was permitted to visit the lagoon region. On a second trip in January 1920 he was allowed to preach in a number of places and was well received. Such centres as Jacqueville, Pass, Abra, Débrimou, and Tiaha agreed to build churches and living quarters for pastors, and to guarantee them a monthly wage of 150 francs. They contributed generously to Hayford during his visit, and when later he sent pictures to be sold as membership cards in his church, they sold well at 2 francs per man and 1.50 per woman.[1]

Despite the apparent success of his visit, he was disliked by the chiefs, especially Yesso, the Chief of Jacqueville,[2] who found that his people abandoned their work to listen to Hayford, and, emboldened by his presence, defied the Chief's authority.

The Chiefs need not have worried. The villagers did not even begin to build the churches, well aware that they could not afford a stipend of 150 francs for a pastor. The elders admitted to the Administrateur that they had made rash promises because

> they were not able to resist the charm of Mark Hayford's words, since he was an African like themselves who spoke well and everywhere made a great display of the portrait of his wife, a European.[3]

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1 Bourgine's 1st Report.

2 Yesso had become a Catholic in 1916 and was "the apostle of his village." (Les Missions Catholiques, LV, October 1923, p. 484.)

3 Bourgine's 1st Report.

At the end of April 1920, when a young man named Fraser appeared as Secretary-Treasurer of Hayford's Mission, he was coldly received. He had intended to go to the villages to whom pastors had been promised to give assurances of Hayford's interest and to receive the membership dues. Fraser's first call was at Jacqueville, where Chief Yesso refused to tolerate his presence, and as the Administrateur told him that he was not to travel around and that an order for his expulsion was being issued, he soon returned to Cape Coast empty-handed.

It was a year later that Hayford attempted, through the Governor of the Gold Coast, to visit "the churches of his denomination established in the Ivory Coast." Permission to visit was granted, but it was drawn to the Gold Coast Governor's attention that Hayford had no churches in the colony, since these could only be authorized by an official decree of the President of France, a necessary protection against foreign African pastors who had in the previous few years set the people against their lawful chiefs and had shamefully extorted money from them.[1]

This suspicious attitude towards Hayford's presence was a result of the belated decision of the Administration to throw its support to the Mission of the Fathers of Lyon, following the signing of the Protocol of St. Germain-en-Laye on 10 September 1919.

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[1] Abid. I-4-62, Letter from Lieutenant-Governor, Ivory Coast, to Governor, Gold Coast, 3 August 1921.

The provisions of this treaty included guarantees of protection and assistance to religious enterprises organized in Africa by subjects of the signatory powers. The only limitation permitted on the freedom of missionaries was that "necessary for the maintenance of public security and order, or as may result from the enforcement of the constitutional law of any of the Powers exercising authority in African territory."[1] This gave the Ivory Coast authorities room to manoeuvre, and they immediately began to consider how the full force of the provisions might be evaded.

Up to this time the feeble Methodist Mission had given the Administration very little cause for concern. With the exception of the Agent at Aboisso, Joseph C. Fian, its clergy were natives of the Gold Coast, the lay-leaders were English speaking, and only at Abidjan and Grand Lahou was any expansion of the work among the Ivoirians visible. During 1920 Harry Webster, Chairman of the Gold Coast District of the Methodist Church, reminded E.W. Thompson, Goudie's successor in London, that the difficulties of the Ivory Coast Mission were continuing, despite previous assurances that at the end of the war the Foreign Office would be requested to do something.[2] But in London there was no encouragement available. Post-war disillusionment had led to declining revenues for the Methodist Missionary Society, and that,

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1 Buell, The Native Problem in Africa, II, op. cit., p. 71.

2 M.M.S.-G.C., Webster to Thompson, 24 July 1920.

combined with the butchery at the Front, had reduced the missionary potential. The Gold Coast Methodists were left to do what they could with the work in the Ivory Coast.

Despite the helplessness of Protestantism, the Administration was still convinced that, given the opportunity, it would act as an instrument of British expansion. An enquiry was set in motion by a warning on 29 December 1919 from Goodman at Audouin. It revealed a serious collapse of the traditional social order in many villages of the Cercle des Lagunes, shown chiefly in a repudiation by the youth of the authority of their elders. This had happened at Audouin; the young people had deserted the Methodist Church founded by Goodman to attend the services devised by Dô.[1]

During May and June 1920, Administrateur Bourgine made a full enquiry into this development. He reported that the Catholic missionaries had failed to win over the Harris converts, while the Protestants had had a great success, as was testified by the rapid spread of English, which most natives in the coastal area were inclined to learn instead of French. However, the social breakdown had nothing to do with the churches; it was, Bourgine believed, the result of the boredom of religious life since Harris had done away with witches and traditional ceremonies. For a time, as they learned Protestant ways from the Sierra Leoneans and Fantis, they were content with them. But

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[1] Bourgine's 1st Report.

when such prophets as Dô and Yessu appeared, they told such marvelous tales and inaugurated such exciting ceremonies that mystical crazes swept the populace, visions were seen, and the deluded people "abandoned their work and for days on end the woods and waves echoed with hymn-singing and the ringing of bells."[1]

The presence of a variety of religious experiences from which to choose led to divisions, especially of the young from the old. This was due to strains developing in the traditional system of matrilineal inheritance. Under the new conditions the young men were unwilling to work with their fathers for the ultimate benefit of their cousins. A youth in this area in 1920 desired to marry as soon as possible the bride provided by his father and to leave the paternal home. So strained were feelings that if the parents were Protestant, the youths might follow Dô or Yessu, or if the elders were Catholic, the youths became Protestant. The rift thus extended between the religions meant that the son remained absent from the funeral of the parents; Catholic and Protestant could not marry; members of different religious sects would not work together in communal tasks; and in some places the young men took advantage of their superior strength to force the old to join their sect. Often they set up a new chief and refused to obey the one recognized by the Administration, or in other cases set up "little soviets," refused to

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[1] Bourgine's 1st Report.

be controlled by authority, and ran away from the forced labour.[1]

Bourgine thought that the English influence and that of the prophetic sects might be overcome by encouraging both Protestant and Catholic church services under the direction of Frenchmen or French subjects, provided that in the services people were given an opportunity to rejoice, sing, dance, and make lots of noise. The ethic of Christianity, which he believed they needed, was beyond their ability to grasp for many years.

Bourgine's belief was that the English-speaking evangelists purchased popular support by spreading the whisper that the Ivory Coast was going to be annexed by Great Britain, and that then the chiefs and elders would administer land and dispense justice, taxes would be lowered, and there would be no more forced labour or military service. While waiting for the advent of this day, they used religion as a cover for fighting among themselves and showing an independence towards the Administration which the latter, lacking personnel and dutiful and capable native chiefs, could not suppress.

Before being forwarded to Dakar, Bourgine's facts and interpretations were discussed at Bingerville and supplemented by further evidence. The chief additional point brought out was the harmful effect of the preachings of Dô and Yessu on the cult of the dead or ancestor worship, "the cornerstone of the family and of animist society."

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[1] Bourgine's 1st Report.

Once they were taught to ignore the dead, or to show contempt for them, even burying them unclothed and acting as if they had no further existence, there was nothing to prevent the living deserting the home, "the altar of the family religion where the spirits will receive the duties performed by their descendants."[1] The head of the family had no hold over the young people, which explained their disobedience.

The Protestant evangelists were blamed also for introducing novel ideas of the power of the state, and a "booklet of propaganda" was quoted in which the civil power was said to have no authority over the church. Lieutenant-Governor Antonetti commented that this doctrine could lead to consequences opposed to French domination, and would have

> the effect of destroying the belief of our people (held by all primitive societies) that authority is of a mystical nature, and that the Chief exercises it as the direct representative of the Great Spirit.[2]

Antonetti was of the opinion that the submission of the Ivory Coast to the French had come about largely because French strength was regarded as a sign of divine sanction, but that the power shown by "English Protestantism" in the person of Harris and his work had given the impression that Great Britain's spiritual power was greater than that of France, and hence her temporal power was stronger too. The Lieutenant-Governor himself, on tours, had heard conditions in the Gold

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1 Dakar, Comments on Bourgine's Reports, apparently by Antonetti.

2 Dakar, Comments on Bourgine's Reports, apparently by Antonetti.

Coast extolled, and had no doubt that people expected the Ivory Coast to pass to Britain.

The decision which emerged from discussions at Bingerville and Dakar was that the neutral policy followed in religious matters must come to an end. French missionaries must be strengthened and encouraged to show more initiative. They would have to be permitted, in fact encouraged, to carry on educational work, although under strict Government regulation. Foreign missionaries would be under a great disadvantage, as the language used in the schools would be French, teachers would need French professional qualifications, and the examinations would be set by the Government. In the churches the only languages permitted would be French, Latin, or a vernacular.[1]

Almost immediately amicable gestures were made to the Catholic Fathers. The Lieutenant-Governor was present at a Te Deum sung at the Cathedral in Grand Bassam on 11 November 1920, and at a Solemn Mass in Bingerville on 8 May 1921 honouring Saint Jeanne d'Arc.[2]

In the preceding five years the Fathers had done very little to merit the confidence of the Administration in their ability to deal with the Harris converts. Although Harris had never discriminated against the Catholic Church, the Fathers had blackened him as an instrument of a Protestant "plot" and an agent of German aggression.[3] When

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1 Dakar, Comments on Bourgine's Reports.

2 Bianquis, op. cit., p. 23, quoting "Catholiques ou Protestants? (La Côte d'Ivoire de demain)," Nouvelles Religieuses, 1 October 1921.

3 Gorju, "Un Prophète," op. cit., p. 115.

Harris had been expelled, Father Gorju had looked confidently forward to bringing all the converts into the Catholic fold, provided more missionaries and more spacious churches were supplied. Gorju's first requirement could not be met while war raged in Europe, but the second was possible if those who read his account were sufficiently moved to send generous contributions for the purpose.[1]

The fatuousness of making the construction of fine churches at Abidjan and Bingerville a pre-condition for the winning over of the Ivoirian masses who, by his own account, had built chapels and churches for themselves without any outside help, seems not to have occurred to Gorju. This conspicuous lack of initiative and independence in the Catholic approach was noted several years later by the Administrateur at Grand Lahou. The Catholic congregation there was shrinking steadily, he said, because of the indifference of the Fathers; whereas the Protestants sent an African clergyman to their congregation every month,

> Père Moly is content to write to his representative to have the psalms sung in Latin, taking care to observe the new pronunciation adopted in the past few years in the churches of France.[2]

Although it probably made no difference to their approach, the Fathers could have claimed the Prophet Harris's blessing on their work. In 1916 at Grand Bassa in Liberia he addressed a gathering of townspeople, including the chiefs and fetish priests, and in the presence

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1 Gorju, "Un Prophète," op. cit., p. 119.

2 Abid. X-39-5, Political Report for Cercle de Lahou, 4th quarter 1918.

of several Catholic missionaries, demanded that the fetishes be burned and that everyone join the Christian church--the Catholic Church, "the old church, the great church, the mother of churches."[1]

Even without this testimonial, the number of Harris converts who had become Catholic each year was encouraging. The number of catechumens had risen from 400 in 1914 to 8,000 in 1917;[2] baptisms, from about 80 annually to 600-700 in 1915 and the following years.[3] Yet they had attracted only a small proportion of the converts, and part of the reason for this lay in the differences between the religion they offered and that which Harris had promised. When these converts timidly entered the Catholic churches so elegantly furnished by Father Gorju and his colleagues, they were affronted by the statues, the candles, and the incense, reminiscent of their cast off fetishes,[4] while they looked in vain for the Bible, the depository of God's Word, which the messengers promised by Harris would use for teaching. Because of the Book's importance, the village churches purchased copies of it (often large English family Bibles) through the firms, and though they made no effort to read them, treasured them as an essential part of their church furniture. The Fathers and their catechists, on the other hand,

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1 Harrington, op. cit., p. 194.

2 Bianquis, op. cit., pp. 24-5.

3 Marty, op. cit., p. 18.

4 Oral evidence of Dr. W.J. Platt, London, 21 March 1966.

stressed the importance of the Mass. They were hostile to polygamy, and to the singing and dancing to the hypnotic calabash rhythms, and even the feasting which became part of the life of so many of the new churches. Even when the Harris converts had become Catholics, they seemed inferior in faith and practice to those whom the Church won directly from fetishism;[1] this is not hard to understand when their conversion experiences are considered.

More than anything else, there seems to have been a lack of rapport between the Fathers and the Ivoirians; this is an aspect noted in every official criticism of them. Bourgine, discussing their insignificant achievements up to 1920, said:

> They seem to lack resources; those outside the large centres live meagrely, often with less comfort than the natives they come to instruct. Their churches are very modest buildings and their services lack pomp. The Fathers seem, in a general way, to lack the prestige that the natives expect to meet among the 'representatives of the religion of the French.' They see them financially poor and without any moral support from the authorities, who observe a strict religious neutrality; up to now people have not had much esteem for their persons and the religion they teach.[2]

The Catholic converts were sometimes a source of social discord, as at Anoumabo, where they were refused permission to marry on the grounds that, as friends of the white people, they should marry whites. In many other cases, as already noted, it was the young men, rebelling against chiefs, elders, and parents, who called themselves

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[1] L'Echo, February 1930, p. 39 (an unsigned comment following the recent report of Harris's death).

[2] Bourgine's 1st Report.

Catholics. Normally, the villagers, sure that Harris was an English Protestant, were content to leave Catholicism to the employees of the Administration and the shopkeepers, while this latter group lived somewhat apart from other people and held themselves superior.[1] In such villages the English-speaking Methodist workers, usually clerks by profession, were the commonest religious teachers, and they led the inhabitants of innumerable villages to call themselves Protestants and to try to follow Methodist practices.

The Fathers enjoyed one advantage where the ambitious and young were concerned, especially after the Administration gave them support. They offered a link with France, with civilization and the road to power, which the Wesleyans could not offer. For the older people, it was enough to be free of the demands of the spirits (even if they did regret the end of their festivals), but for the young the new faith brought them only halfway to the society of the future. They defied their elders and the united society of the village to go to the Catholic Church. "We abandoned our parents," one of them has testified, "to obtain grace for them and in the hope that we could later bring them to our way of thinking."[2]

The Catholic chapels had been destroyed as indiscriminately

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1 Bourgine's 1st Report.

2 Oral evidence of Boniface Tchikpadan, Songon M'Brathé, August 1963.

as the Protestant during the years of suppression,[1] but when the Government decided to use the Catholic Mission, it assigned them the best of the existing village chapels and the rest were (again) destroyed.[2] By September 1920 they claimed to have accrued 30 secondary stations and 49 chapels in five years. The Mission Station founded at Grand Lahou in March 1920 was the first since Aboisso in 1905. By 1922 the Church was claiming 20,000 catechumens as compared with the 400 of 1914. Father Gorju gave a belated thanks to Harris.[3]

On 25 January 1921 the Governor General applied to Paris for guidance in applying the Protocol, and only after a delay of more than a year, in March 1922, was the decree issued. It followed the lines already projected by the Ivory Coast authorities and approved at Dakar. Educational and religious institutions came under strict supervision; no churches might be established and no collections might be taken without permission, and only French, Latin, or a vernacular might be used at religious services.

This last provision threw the Wesleyan Methodist community of the Ivory Coast into despair. They were accustomed to employ English, Fanti, and Nzima, and were not prepared to make a change. The Minister in charge for the past six years, Benjamin Markin, had been moved by

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1 Bianquis, op. cit., p. 23.

2 Ibid., p. 24.

3 Ibid., p. 25.

the Synod of 1922, and his successor, A. Benjamin Dickson, arrived as the crisis burst. Services came to a halt in May. The Chairman at Cape Coast appealed to W.J. Platt, the young English missionary who had maintained Methodist work in Togoland and Dahomey for the past few years, despite hostility there, to help the beleaguered Church.

Platt came, and with his coming the ultimate religious destination of the majority of the Harris converts was determined.

CHAPTER VI

METHODIST EXPANSION IN THE IVORY COAST 1923-1930

Just at the point when the Catholic Fathers, with official backing, seemed likely to win over the Harris converts, the latter, numbering some 100,000, were, in a recent phrase, "menaced by a proselytism infinitely more skillful, that of the missions protestants methodistes."[1] This sinister phrase merely means that the Methodists stumbled into a situation which, through the energies of one man, resulted in the turning of a sizable number of Harris converts towards Methodism. The "skill" which accomplished this was simply a greater sympathy with native institutions than the Catholics had been able to feel.

W.J. Platt, who had taken charge of the Methodist work in Dahomey in 1916, was a very young man to bear the load of responsibility thrust upon him but he thrived on work. By 1920 he had charge of all Dahomey and Togo work.[2] In 1921 at the French Methodist Conference he had recruited a French Methodist minister, Paul Wood, who joined him in 1922, and in 1923 two more Frenchmen, A. Léthel and A. Westphal, were sent out by the Paris Mission.[3] With this nucleus of European

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1 J. Rouch, "Introduction à l'Étude de la Communauté de Bregbo," Journal de la Société des Africanistes, XXXIII, 1, 1963, p. 159.

2 Wesleyan Methodist Church, , Minutes of Conference, 1920.

3 E. de Billy, En Côte d'Ivoire, Paris, 1931, p. ix.

clergy Platt planned to set up a French West African District independent of the Lagos Synod.

The Ivory Coast played no part in Platt's plans, and he became aware of the restricted condition of the Methodists there only in 1922 when Harry Webster at Cape Coast requested his advice and assistance in satisfying tne new conditions. Platt had already experienced the effects of the decree, and he sent a copy of its text to Dickson, the supervising Minister at Bassam, with suggestions for ways of complying with it. At the same time he wrote to Lieutenant-Governor Antonetti, whom he knew personally.[1] Apparently Dickson did not act on his advice, and the crisis in the Methodist community's existence was unchanged when Platt called at Grand Bassam while on his way from England to Dahomey in September 1923. From the Administrateur he received a cordial reception and permission for services in the town, prohibited for some sixteen months, to be resumed. He went on to Bingerville, but found Antonetti much less friendly. Probably he felt that having committed itself to supporting the Catholic Mission, the Administration could hardly encourage its rivals. He explained to Platt that the use of English, Fanti, or Apollonian in the church kept English influence alive and counteracted the effects of French education. He also argued that undesirables from the Gold Coast used Protestantism as a cloak for anti-

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[1] M.M.S.-W.N., Platt to Thompson, 30 October 1923.

government crusades.[1]

Aware of the rights the Methodist Mission might claim under the Protocol of St. Germain, Platt asked the Governor to fix the native language he would permit in church, to allow Methodist agents as British subjects to circulate freely, to allow the Church a period of grace to swtich over from Fanti and English, to grant Methodists permission to collect annual subscriptions, and finally, to inform all his subordinate officers of the concessions so no complications might arise. He promised that, on their part, the Methodists would be satisfied with the same liberty granted to the Catholic Mission, would watch over its people more carefully in future, and would encourage them to use French instead of English.

Although Antonetti had misgivings about trusting a mission headed by an African, he reluctantly agreed to Platt's requests. The Apollonian language might be used in church services for six months. Subscriptions might be solicited provided Dickson submitted a detailed list of collectors with the areas in which they were to work and the dates of the collections.[2]

On conferring with the leading Methodists in Grand Bassam, Platt discovered that Agni was the vernacular most easily "heard" by

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[1] M.M.S.-W.N., "First Report on the Work of the Wesleyan Mission, Ivory Coast, West Africa," submitted by W.J. Platt, October 1923. Hereafter cited as "Platt's 1st Report."

[2] Platt's 1st Report.

Fantis, and he immediately instructed the church workers to use it among themselves and to send their children to Government schools to learn French. The catechists were to learn French also, and use it at every opportunity. Platt promised that a French-speaking lay agent would be sent from Dahomey to help Dickson in his dealings with the Government. At his request Dickson had three dozen Fanti hymns translated into Agni; these were printed in Lagos and the hymnbooks were in use at Bassam within three months. The Methodists were promised that they would be incorporated in Platt's new district (there had been suggestions that they should be taken over by the Paris Mission), and that their boys would be sent to Dahomey for Protestant schooling and training as catechists.

All this planning was done by Platt in ignorance of the Harris churches, and it was not from Dickson that he learned about the converts, but from a Protestant official who had actually written to a pastor friend in France soliciting missionaries for them. He thought the converts were in danger of being led astray by better educated undesirables with political aims. According to Platt,

> The Mayor of Bassam stated the same danger and said our people had had amongst them, from the more advanced neighbouring Colony, fervent followers of the Marcus Garvey doctrine; these men had exploited our interest in favour of politics--hence the Government action.[1]

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[1] Platt's 1st Report.

Other Frenchmen whom Platt met at Bassam told him more about the Harris Movement and urged him to help its development.

Five days after his arrival in the Ivory Coast Platt resumed his journey to Porto Novo, and from there on 11 October 1923 he despatched to London a report on his investigation of the field, with his suggestion that it be included as part of his proposed French West African District. The officers of the W.M.M.S. were far from being enthusiastic about schemes which would demand more money, for when they discussed the future of their Ivory Coast work in November it was with the knowledge that their total income for the year was disappointing. In actual fact, it was £178,440, which was £63,560 less than that contributed in the preceding year and £86,560 short of the year's target.[1]

The Lagos Synod approved Platt's plans for a new District early in 1924,[2] and this was agreed upon by Conference at Nottingham in July. The new District would have its own budget for 1925.

It was, therefore, with greater authority that Platt came back to the Ivory Coast early in April 1924. The W.M.M.S. wished him to study the situation more thoroughly. He visited Abidjan, the future capital, and at the railway station was met by a crowd of three hundred people.

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1 The Methodist Recorder, 17 January 1924.

2 M.M.S.-W.N., Platt to Thompson, 15 February 1924.

> Their eagerness to see a white Protestant missionary was embarrassing. Persecution and scorn from Catholic priests and people; suppression by the Administration; neglect from organized Protestantism, had almost led the people to the belief that the jibe of the Catholics that they did not belong to any 'proper' church--having no whiteman--was true.[1] Their eagerness and joy made me wonder ...[2]

Local tradition has embroidered the coming of Platt with some of the awe-inspiring attributes of Harris himself. A native of Abidjan has testified that all the villages were waiting for the coming of the white missionary. He came to the house of Chief Abrogoua of Adjamé-Abidjan, where all the leading men gathered to meet him.

> Then he declared that he was the representative of all the Protestants. Word of all the evil done to them and of their torments had come to him. 'God is the sole Father and Creator of all,' he said, 'and that is why we worship Him.' He warned that if any chief made trouble for the Protestants he would be called before the Governor, Platt's own friend.
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> While they were all in the Chief's house one of the elders called Djobe Djako cried out, 'What has this Whiteman come to look for? The village belongs to us and we are not going to observe what he has told us.' Platt stepped forward and putting his two hands on him shook him, saying that what he had said was to be done. Within a few days the young man died, becoming ill immediately after the shaking.[3]

This story suggests that some people were as willing to see in Platt the same messenger of Divine Wrath which had terrified them in Harris.

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[1] Note the similarity of sentiment expressed here and that of the Fanti Muslims in southern Ghana, who, according to some accounts, affiliated themselves with the Ahmadiyya sect because the latter's missionaries were 'white men' and the Muslims had long been humiliated by the Christians who said there were no white men of their religion. H.J. Fisher, "Early Fante Islam," Ghana Bulletin of Theology, I, 7, p. 28.

[2] M.M.S.-W.N., "Second Report on the Work of the Wesleyan Mission, Ivory Coast, West Africa," submitted by W.G. Platt, April 1924. Hereafter cited as "Platt's 2nd Report."

[3] Mathieu Adobi.

The Administration, on the other hand, at last welcomed Protestantism as an ally. As the Administrateur at Grand Bassam reported:

> The Protestant Mission bestirs itself and is putting itself in order. The Pastor newly arrived at Bassam[1] is actively insinuating and claims that in three years he will have transformed the spirits of the followers of Methodism so that these will be more French than Gaul.[2]

From Abidjan Platt travelled by canoe, car, and train to dozens of villages along the coast and inland. Everywhere the villages were in celebration. "Village bands, whole villages bedecked with flags, street arches of palm-leaves, all formed part of the outward signs of the people's enthusiasm and longing."[3] Everywhere he was welcomed as the white messenger promised by Harris. At Lozoua he found a fine stone church being built and all the villages around had "Protestant" churches, that is, they had obtained Bibles which they guarded as treasures and as a symbol of those who would come to teach from them. They felt that the Catholic chapels had no right to be considered as "true churches" because they had no Bibles.

From his base at Grand Lahou Platt prepared for a thirteen-hour canoe trip to Fresco, the westernmost limit of the Protestant work. The Administrateur advised him to send word ahead to Ebonou for a fresh relay of canoe men, to be ready at 11 o'clock on Sunday night. When his

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1 Probably Léthel who came at the end of May.

2 Abid. X-46-17, Report of Administrateur, Grand Bassam, 2nd quarter 1924.

3 Platt's 2nd Report.

party arrived there they were surprised. They found

> instead of a sleeping town with six canoe-men ready for us--a town en fête with a procession, songs, lanterns awaiting our arrival. We were conducted by a hundred eager folk to the very long church where we met 600 people--members of this Harris Church.

There was lots of noise, then a deep hush when the leader (Sako) asked Platt to accept this church with those of eight neighbouring villages into his Society. Platt asked the people to consider their decision carefully, and explained what they would have to undertake in the way of church discipline and other obligations. However, they had made up their minds long before to hand over their establishment to the first Protestant missionary to appear among them, and on Platt's return from Fresco 24 hours later they gave him an official document (made out by a Fanti clerk) marking their definite gift of their nine churches to the Methodist Mission on the one condition that they be sent a catechist without delay. The number of people in the congregations involved was about 2,000. Many of the younger ones, Platt was told, had made up their minds to become Roman Catholic on Good Friday (four days away) since there was a Catholic catechist stationed in the town.

In the Fresco area he saw many flourishing Harris churches, most of which showed no desire to become Methodist. "We doubt not that once we, as a Mission, show them that we mean business, they will prefer the enlightenment of that state to the illiteracy which now prevails."

During this tour, Platt was impressed by the total absence of

"fetish," the fact that every village had its church, and the institution of the Twelve Apostles which governed most of these churches, though he regretted the presence of polygamists in these bodies. He believed that there was enough money in the villages to make the church self-supporting. He saw a pressing need for catechists and literature to overcome the backward state of education among the converts. The Government officers showed great tolerance of the Protestants, now that they were coming under Methodist direction, which indicated that they expected the missionaries to exercise the same efficient control over the converts that they did in Togo and Dahomey. They were evidently willing to let the Fathers experience the challenge of competition. According to Platt, the 15-30 age group had almost everywhere become Catholic.[1]

Platt returned to Dahomey full of plans and on the same day that his report was posted to England (21 May 1924) he sent a colleague, Antoine Lêthel, with ten French-speaking native catechists, to Grand Bassam. Lêthel was to be in charge at Abidjan for a few months, until relieved by Paul Wood. Lêthel would take over-all charge of the work in four new groupings: Grand Bassam, Abidjan, Dabou, and Grand Lahou. As Platt outlined his scheme, Dickson would remain at Bassam, assisted by Longueville from Dahomey, while new agents from Dahomey would be scattered through the colony.[2]

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1 Platt's 2nd Report.

2 M.M.S.-W.N., Report by Platt, 30 May 1924.

Platt provided the Governor with a full account of the financial organization of the Methodist Church, and explained that he would sign certificates of authorization for each church, for information of the Government, and for each preacher, the latter being renewable annually. He also set before the Administration requests for concessions of land for churches and catechists' houses at Abidjan, Dabou, Aboisso, and Assinie.

From the Missionary Committee in London Platt requested another missionary and 100,000 francs for the purchase of land and the building of a European house, as well as 5,000 francs for the printing of such literature as a primer containing a simple catechism, public prayers, and an outline of the life of Christ.

In submitting his report of his actions during and following his second investigation of the Ivory Coast situation, Platt claimed that he had used his authority to the full, lest the golden opportunity for evangelism offered by the Harris converts should be lost. The obstacles which since 1914 had hindered intelligent co-operation with the Administration had been removed by the Treaty of St. Germain and the language law of 14 February 1922.

> Now the responsibility is fully ours and is ours alone. We have no excuse, nor do we seek one. Our responsibility is not even shared by any other Protestant denomination. If our Society does not act immediately, now that WE KNOW, the words "Ivory Coast" should be graven on our hearts.[1]

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[1] M.M.S.-W.N., Report by Platt, 30 May 1924.

Platt had great ambitions for the Mission he headed, and great confidence in his own ability to push them forward. During the early part of 1924 he had come under some attack by the Paris Missionary Society, who possibly resented an Englishman's being in charge of Protestant work in French West Africa. They accused him of using British diplomatic officers to intervene with the French authorities and of distributing Huguenot crosses to the Protestant converts who could be expected to regard them as fetishes.[1] The Huguenot crosses, distributed widely in the Ivory Coast and moulded in concrete on the new churches, were, said Platt, simply a way for Protestants to identify themselves to each other. Regarding the first charge, he had merely threatened to use the services of the British Consul to appeal directly to the Governor General concerning the restrictive attitude of Lieutenant-Governor Fourn in Dahomey. The threat alone had been sufficient to make Fourn be reasonable.[2] This experience and others led Platt to the belief that British missionaries, contrary to expectations, had easier relations with the Administration than their French colleagues. Presumably, officials listened more attentively to an Englishman who represented a strong Protestantism than to those they knew belonged to a small minority in France.[3]

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1 M.M.S.-W.N., Thompson to Platt, 9 May 1924.

2 M.M.S.-W.N., Platt to Thompson, 7 June 1924.

3 M.M.S.-W.N., Platt to Thompson, 7 June 1924.

The Dahomean-Togolese contingent in the Ivory Coast found more work awaiting them than they could manage. Léthel begged for at least six more missionaries, but Platt's cabled request to London met with a snub from Thompson, who pointed out that men could not be removed from college prematurely.[1] The African catechists who accompanied Léthel played a very useful role during this crucial period. One of them had been Platt's servant boy, Michel Atayi. He was stationed at Akoupé, and wrote colourful descriptions of his success: "People were coming, running like milk, to have their names inscribed for baptism in the Protestant church."[2]

Wood and Léthel composed "An Appeal to French Pastors and Students," a copy of which was forwarded to London by Platt on 26 August. They explained that they had been at work in the Ivory Coast for three months, along with fifteen native agents from Dahomey and about eleven who were already there. They went on:

> With their help we have been able to take the names of the Protestants in each village, to give each Church the beginning of organization and to start, however badly, the education of the members. We are able therefore to cite exact figures which will allow you to form some idea of the importance of the work in Ivory Coast; the number of churches is about 150, divided ... into four sections; Lahou 30; Dabou 50; Abidjan 50; Bassam-Assinie 20. The number of registered Protestants in Lahou is about 4,000, and of those of Dabou about 16,000. We still lack statistics for Abidjan and Bassam, but we feel assured that they contain quite 8,000 Protestants. To explain the figure quoted

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1 M.M.S.-W.N., Thompson to Platt, 12 August 1924.

2 M.M.S.-W.N., Michel Atayi to Platt, 15 July 1924.

> for the region of Dabou, it is enough to say that there are 8 churches of 500 members, and that one of them, Ousserou contained 1328, while those of 3 to 4 hundred are very numerous. We reach then a total of 30,000 protestants, and this calculation applies only to the coast between Fresco and Assinie, that is to the populations whom we have already visited; if we wish to add those of the interior it is impossible to say what numbers we shall reach. During a tour in the region of Tiassalé we have counted more than 4,000 protestants; we have received a letter from those of Sassandra begging us to visit them.
>
> If we glance at the spiritual condition of these Christians, we are struck by their deep ignorance; their untrained preachers can only repeat distant echoes gathered from the Protestants of the Gold Coast, Liberia, or Sierra Leone; superstition is still great, although we have found only a few feeble traces of fetishism, and morality is weak. But all are aware of their ignorance and have a burning desire for learning, and it is enough to see the warmth with which we have been received to realize the intensity of the universal desire for the true Gospel of Jesus.

The letter concluded with an appeal for reinforcements from the ranks of French Protestantism. Platt, enclosing a copy for Thompson, estimated that if enough help were given to the Mission, it would have more than 50,000 members within ten years.[1]

An example of the response the Mission was meeting was shown during August when Wood and Léthel addressed a throng of 1,500 at Abidjan and inspired them to raise funds for a great central church which would be built on a plot of land they had already decided to buy (at 4,000 francs) on the Abidjan "Plateau." It was obvious by this time that Abidjan was destined to be the economic and political centre of the colony.[2]

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1 M.M.S.-W.N., Platt to Thompson, 26 August 1924.

2 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Report of Paul Wood for 1924.

The ordinary monthly meeting of the W.M.M.S. Committee held on 24 September 1924 turned out to be crucial for the attempt to win the Harris converts to Methodism. The signs were not auspicious. For thirty years the Society had embarked on no new fields, and in the post-war situation they did not propose to be adventurous. The Treasurers forecast a £16,000 debit on the year's accounts (it later turned out to be £20,000[1]) and it was while thinking about a solution to that problem that the members listened as Thompson read Platt's account of the extent of the Ivory Coast opportunity. In less than an hour the Committee had decided that the Ivory Coast presented a challenge from God which they could not ignore.[2] They decided to give publicity to Harris and the Ivory Coast situation in an attempt to raise the extra men and money required.

Their publicity campaign opened in strength on 9 October. On that date the Methodist Recorder published an article, "The Ivory Coast Adventure--A Wonderful Opportunity for Methodism," based on Platt's descriptions, as well as using excerpts from Lethel's "Appeal." It was illustrated with a lagoon scene and a photograph of Harris and the three women. The whole page facing the article was devoted to an advertisement entitled "The Like was never told ...," telling more of the story embellished with a quotation from a letter of Platt's cook-

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1 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Thompson to Platt, 6 February 1925.

2 Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, 112th Annual Report, London, 1926, p. 82.

boy, Michel:

> 'The people beautiful receive me with joy ... I start with them all the rules and managements of the Methodist work. We commence morning prayers and evening prayer. We will start class meeting also soon ... The people always visited me at my premises every evening more than 50 persons in number.'
> What do You say and what will You do? ask the W.M.M.S. This simple fellow is doing his bit with enthusiasm.

The advertisement concluded by asking for money enough to send out three men and two women.

The article, aimed at explaining the background of the advertisement more fully, noted with wisdom:

> It is beyond the power of anyone to set an exact spiritual value upon the appeal which is now made by the people of the Ivory Coast. We are not made judges of our fellow-men. There may be subtle political and other motives lying behind what appears, or mingling with it. The African's mind is not ours. But of this we may be sure, there is genuine religious desire, and a need beyond our power to express or exaggerate.

Pointing out that the failure of Methodism to move in left the field open to other faiths, Islam or Roman Catholicism, the author said:

> Most probable of all is it that they will set up an independent African Church, with a mutilated and debased code of morals. The moral demand of Christ--His higher Law--is the great stumbling block to the African, and especially the Christian insistence upon monogamy as the basis of the family and of the social order.

A second account appeared in December in The Foreign Field, the Missionary Society's journal. Entitled "Thirty Thousand African Christians Without a Pastor," and illustrated by the same photograph of Harris and his three female companions, it gave a spirited account

of Harris (largely erroneous) and of Platt's discovery of the unknown converts.

In the latter part of 1924 Wood and Lêthel wrestled with the factors threatening to snatch part of the harvest of souls from them. The Twelve Apostles (where these had been instituted) and other old men who had been accustomed to ruling their congregations had no desire to relinquish their authority or to accept the discipline the missionaries wished to impose on them. They saw no necessity for new rules, nor for instruction from catechists. Those who had been baptized by Harris or his disciples resented Methodist guidance,[1] especially from young Dahomeans who were not really prepared for the responsibility they were called upon to assume. In some cases the latter became dishonest and insubordinate, and though the rest were, like Platt's servant, Michel, useful for purposes of mission propaganda, they were otherwise a source of problems.

Busy as they were on the coastal strip, the missionaries had to turn back emissaries from the Abbeys, among whom there were said to be 80 churches.[2] On the other hand, Platt was disappointed when he went to the Sanwi area (visiting Aboisso, Krinjabo, and Assinie) to find the Agnis, supposedly the people who had gone into exile for the sake of their Protestant faith, quite indifferent to it, and for the

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1 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Wood to Thompson, 18 November 1924.

2 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Wood to Thompson, 18 November 1924.

most part converted to Catholicism.[1]

Paul Wood found himself obliged to spend much time on a very material side of church life, the construction-equipment side. The new Methodists were anxious to build fine churches--already over twenty were under construction--and enough money was easily found to build in brick and stone and to have the roofs tiled. They could not be left on their own to arrange all this because of the shameless way tradesmen, masons, and carpenters were accustomed to cheat them. The missionaries protected their interests here, at the same time impressing on them that the rules of the Society would not allow building without the Committee's permission and without two-thirds of the necessary sum being collected. At Wood's request, a lay missionary was recruited in France to help with construction.

So far as the organization of the Church was concerned, the missionaries had no wish to introduce unnecessary changes. Far from being dissolved, the Twelve Apostles in each congregation, especially those who were "preachers," were instructed by the catechists. The latter also explained to them the rules of the Methodist Church, and when they found these difficult to enforce and of doubtful necessity, the Apostles would appeal directly to the missionaries. For many of them it was hard to accept new ways after ten years of doing as they pleased, especially in the matter of money. Nonetheless, a majority

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[1] M.M.S.-F.W.A., Platt to Thompson, 21 November 1924.

of congregations paid as required for their catechumen cards, for quarterly subscriptions, special collections and the Harvest Festivals which were introduced for the first time. There was more resistance to the payment of the annual subscription.

Since much of the hymn-singing was incomprehensible and meaningless, the catechists began translating Methodist hymns from French into the vernacular. The original vernacular script (Agni) was worked out by Dickson, and following the efforts of Aggrey (Ebrié), deBilly (Adjoukrou), and Benoit (Dida),[1] small hymnbooks were soon available in these languages. W.T. Balmer (formerly Headmaster at Mfantsipim School at Cape Coast but now Secretary of the Methodist West African Literature Society[2]) had prepared a catechism for Africa which was rendered into some vernaculars.

The country around Abidjan and Bingerville, inhabited by Ebriês, had no vernacular literature in preparation in 1924. However, it was an important area with many potential converts, but also with chiefs and officials willing to persecute the Protestants, who were already disheartened by continuing neglect. They "wonder that the Christian Churches cannot send a great number of catechists to their aid and say 'we shall pay them, they need not trouble for their food!'"[3]

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1 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Balmer to Platt, 20 August 1926.

2 Bartels, op. cit., p. 177. Bartels' summary of the 1915-1925 period in the Ivory Coast is misleading.

3 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Wood's Report for 1924.

In the Dabou area a majority of the 35,000 Adjoukrous, whom Wood described as quick, exuberant, and troublesome to govern, were Protestant--thanks to three Fanti traders who had travelled among them every Sunday--and these gave an open welcome to the Methodist missionaries. Only in one area where a "prophet" was in connivance with certain chiefs was there opposition, and the warm reception given them in the large villages, such as Yassup, Orbaff, and Toupa, made up for this. Here, as everywhere, they were surprised at the great willingness of the men, especially the young men, to adopt monogamy and thus to receive the Methodist baptism.

In the final area that stretched from Grand Lahou to Sassandra Wood felt that there was grave danger of the Fathers reaping in all the Harris converts, as they had already done in part, and he suggested that a motor launch in possession of the missionary would greatly assist him to visit the villages along the Bandama so assiduously visited by these Fathers.

At Bohico, a village near Grand Lahou, an incident took place late in 1924 which made a great impression. The Catechist had put under discipline a rebellious member of the church. The angry member vowed that he would never enter the church again. Shortly after, he committed adultery, and "the same evening, when entering his house, he was stung by a serpent." He felt very ill in the hours which followed and in the middle of the night called the Catechist and confessed his sins, saying,

> I have rebelled against God, and against the Church, I have committed a grievous sin, and now God who is a righteous judge is punishing me. I am going to die!

The Catechist, while binding his wounds, said:

> Truly God is punishing you for your sins, but he can save you, if you ask his pardon. The Lord gives pardon and life through Jesus Christ to those who ask him, and who promise to obey his commandments faithfully.

The man repented, lived, and the town was very much impressed.[1]

According to Wood, the Harris converts were to be found far inland as well, along the line of the railway through the forest belt, where they waited for the missionaries. Two young men came from such a village when it was heard that the missionaries had arrived. They came four days on foot and by train to Abidjan and walked from there to Dabou. Having arrived in Wood's presence dusty, tired, and hungry, they gazed on him for hours, absorbing his assurances that he <u>was</u> the Protestant God-man.[2] They questioned him that night and again next morning. They wore Catholic medals on strings around their necks; these Wood replaced by Huguenot crosses, "telling them to show it in the various villages as a proof that the protestant missionaries were coming to their aid."[3]

These young men evidently understood what the white missionary stood for, but some did not. Platt noted that

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1 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Wood's Report for 1924.

2 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Wood's Report for 1924.

3 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Wood's Report for 1924.

> we do not wish to say that all seekers come to us with such pure motives as these good men from the Interior. We know that at Lopo the people believed that in accepting Christ they renewed their youth and never died--thus their possessions would always be theirs and not cause palavers after death amongst 'grabbing relations.' We know that fear often drives them to build their churches in the centre of their village and to cluster around it in their tiny houses. There may be other motives but the thing which impresses us is the open door.[1]

For those like Wood now working entirely in the Ivory Coast there was a constant feeling of frustration and perhaps guilt that the harvest had been ready so long but untended.

> We have constantly to bear the consequences of the neglect of Protestantism, which failed to come to the aid of the protestant churches in this colony after the revival begun by Harris, and now the work is tremendous. It weighs too heavily on shoulders which are too weak! Who will come to our aid![2]

Early in 1925 Wood announced that more than 25,000 people had been enrolled as Catechumens, despite the opposition and calumny of the Catholic missionaries and many village chiefs.[3]

When in May the 112th Annual Meeting of the W.M.M.S. was held at Central Hall, Westminster, the dominant theme was "our nets are breaking," because of the surge of converts into the Society's grasp.[4] Besides the "mass movements" of Harris and of Sampson Oppong, more than 90,000 people had been converted by Methodist missionaries

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1 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Platt's Report for 1924.

2 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Wood's Report for 1924.

3 "The Latest News from West Africa," The Foreign Field, XXI, 7, April 1925, p. 156.

4 See above pp. 230-1.

since 1900, and the Society felt it was extended beyond reasonable limits. Platt was on hand to present the needs of his District and, it was reported, delivered a tour de force when he spoke to the Young Methodists, describing, with the help of Westphal, his discovery of 1923 and how "all along the railway line it was as if the Prince of Wales was passing,"[1] a comparison which in that era conveyed a great deal.

At Platt's request, the editor of the W.M.M.S. periodical, The Foreign Field, F. Deaville Walker, visited the Ivory Coast where he took photographs[2] and made the observations which became the basis for The Day of Harvest (published June 1926), a little volume giving an enthusiastic picture of Harris and his converts calculated to move Methodist hearts and loosen their purse strings. All readers of The Foreign Field were kept informed of developments in the District. In October 1926 it was stated that there were now 160 Methodist Churches and 32,000 enrolled adherents there.[3] In the January 1927 issue Wood described how the church was undertaken in the midst of three villages forming the country town of Acrediou. The villagers came to him and said:

> You are our white man. You know everything. Tell us where and how to build our Church. Find us a mason and a carpenter; order cement, bricks, and wood. We will carry the stones, the sand, and the water which the workmen will need!

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1 The Methodist Recorder, 7 May 1925.

2 He had been a professional photographer before joining the W.M.M.S.

3 O.J. Griffin, "The Cry of Harvest in West Africa," The Foreign Field, XXIII, 1, October 1926, p. 25.

Wood agreed, but told them that according to Mission rules, they could not begin until two-thirds of the money needed (about £200) was in hand. Two days later the treasurer, a local chief, handed him £180. A Sierra Leonean mason named Harris was hired; stones already quarried by the young men were brought to the spot, lime and cement were carried from Dabou in head-basins by a crowd of women and girls who made a festival of it. Some 1,200 people attended the laying of the cornerstone and the mason cried, as he took the trowel, "I wish I could live long enough to build to the glory of God ten thousand churches like this."[1] By his personal pride in his work, so openly shown, he won the active co-operation of all the villagers, who supplied him without trouble with all the sand, water, stones, and bricks he needed.

During 1926 Platt and his colleagues began the publication and private circulation of a brochure to inform Methodists about the Ivory Coast work and to stimulate their interest in it. The English edition, News Notes from French West Africa, was well received (some 500 copies being circulated) but the French version, Courrier de l'A.O.F., was resented by the Reformed Church in France which regarded it as poaching on their preserves, since any money given for the Ivory Coast would be lost to their own mission work.[2]

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[1] P. Wood, "How They Build Churches on the Ivory Coast," The Foreign Field, XXIII, 4, January 1927, p. 93.

[2] M.M.S.-F.W.A., Thompson to Platt, 20 August 1926 and 28 September 1926.

In one issue Antoine Léthel described the reactions of the various groups of Harris converts to the coming of the missionaries. In the Cercle de Lahou the Harris churches had "a character thoroughly religious," which prevented them from becoming Methodists; while the young wished to join the missionaries, the old were satisfied with their position in the church they had evolved. Moreover, there were still "little prophets" around who wanted to keep their adherents.

> These Harris Churches, however dangerous they may be by their lack of discipline and the example that they give to our members, cannot be regarded as permanently outside our church. Rather, we hope that many of them will join us, and that all are waiting to see what will be the attitude of the church at Grand Lahou, which is their mother church.

The Alladians were often opposed to Methodism, since they were influenced by Lahou. Among the Adjoukrous, some three or four villages which had had the best chance of knowing Harris (presumably they had gone to him at Kraffy) remained independent of the missionaries. The Abidjis, who in 1914 had had little connection with the coast, were most firmly attached to the Society, with the exception of two churches which refused to join because of purely local factors.

The situation was most complicated around Abidjan. There, especially among the Ebriés, the independent churches were about to disappear when resuscitated by certain chiefs for political reasons. When the missionaries arrived they found the chiefs instituting state churches, with advantages to their revenue and authority.

> More often than not it was the chiefs who baptised, and who made prayers for the sick, naturally demanding payment each time. They kept up also certain fetich practices which had survived, and of which they held the monopoly. At our arrival the section of those who were true Christians, profiting by the presence of a white man, set themselves to oppose this influence, and for the moment it seemed that with very little trouble we should have the victory, but unhappily we have among our adversaries two of the most powerful chiefs of the district, the Paramount Chief of Kassemblé and the Paramount Chief of the Ebriés. All the enemies of the Mission rallied around these two chiefs, who maintained a native 'prophet' of the village of Audouin. Thanks to this coalition, we have not a single church in a half dozen villages in which the population is almost entirely Protestant; and in a number of other villages, alongside of our Wesleyan Church there exists an independent church patronised by the chief and the greater part of the leading men. The situation is complicated by the fact that the greater part of our members are young folk, and the older people charge them before the Administration with plotting against their authority, an accusation that always carries weight and causes us considerable trouble.[1]

Platt moved the headquarters of his District to Abidjan in 1925 and under his forceful direction during the next five years, the work showed a steady progress, particularly in education. From his first examination of the Harris congregations, he realized the vital importance of providing educational facilities for the children. Since the educated class of Ivoirians was mainly Catholic, the Harris converts were automatically classed as uncivilized "bush-people." Those of their children who were sent to school soon found it expedient to become Catholic. Even if the Harris community could survive this loss of its most intelligent youth, this trend meant it could never play a signifi-

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[1] Article by A. Léthel in News Notes from French West Africa, no. 3, July 1926.

cant role in the progressive life of the country.[1]

As soon as possible an educational centre was set up at Dabou under de Billy. Fifty youths who wished to be catechists built themselves a school and were given a one-year course in the Scriptures. This was not a great success and was superseded by a permanent system of village schools, where religious instruction was given in the vernacular, with a large central school for girls and a Bible school using French at Dabou. The village schools taught not only reading and writing but also games, gardening, and hygiene.[2] By 1930 there were over 1,500 children attending the village schools, and there were four central schools, at Bassam, Abidjan, Dabou, and Lahou. From these the church leaders were drawn.[3]

During 1926 Platt decided he must contact the Prophet Harris, when news reached him that Mark Hayford was busy soliciting funds and missionaries in Paris to carry on the work of his Baptist Mission among the Harris converts.[4] Platt was very much afraid that potential Methodists would join Hayford's church if he actually did appear, and sent Pierre Benoit, along with one of Harris's interpreters, Victor Tano,

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1 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Platt to Thompson, 17 January 1927.

2 Platt, An African Prophet, op. cit., p. 121. Also, Platt, "Facing Our Task on the Ivory Coast," The Foreign Field, XXIII, 11, August 1927, p.262.

3 Platt, An African Prophet, op. cit., p. 123.

4 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Platt to Thompson, 20 August 1926.

to Liberia to find Harris.[1] They landed at Cape Palmas on 23 September from the German steamer "Irmgard," and soon found Harris's family. They learned that despite his family's disapproval, Harris still wandered about evangelizing. The family did not tell Benoit the whole truth about Harris--that he was not only living in polygamy but was also preaching it to the native Christians. "Jesus Christ had twelve disciples and they were men," he would say. "I shall have fourteen disciples and they will be women. This polygamy talk is white man's mouth. Black man no need to trouble his head about it."[2] No wonder that when in 1925 he suffered a stroke which left him for many weeks paralyzed and dumb the missionaries attributed it to "God's avenging sword."

When Benoit met him in September a year later he was evidently so far recovered that he gave no impression of being incapacitated. He was delighted to meet Benoit and Tano, and on 25 September they had long talks. Precious photographs were taken of Harris holding his befeathered cross, painted in red and blue, and wearing on his neck the new Huguenot cross which Benoit had brought for the purpose. This would prove to all doubters in the Ivory Coast that Harris was a Methodist. Benoit told the old man about W.J. Platt and suggested he might like to recommend him to the Ivoirians. He agreed that he would. Similarly, when Tano told him the Methodists advised their people to read the Bible,

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[1] M.M.S.-F.W.A., Platt to Thompson, 26 November 1926.

[2] W.B. Williams, "God's Avenging Sword ...," a promotional pamphlet printed in the Sinoe-Kroo Coast (Methodist) District, Liberia, 25 December 1928, p. 5.

and to follow the Ten Commandments, he agreed that this was good. Even the phrase "Jesus Christ our only Saviour" caught his fancy, and he incorporated it along with the other phrases in the three letters he dictated to Benoit at the latter's request.[1] The first letter was a general communication to all his Ivory Coast followers, telling them to become Methodists and not Roman Catholics, to accept Platt as his successor, to shun fetishes, to read the Bible and observe the Ten Commandments and the word of Jesus Christ. The second letter was to the Chief of Grand Lahou, telling him and his people to become Methodists and to wear the Huguenot cross, and the third brief note to the Harris converts at Fresco was to the same effect.

Benoit returned in triumph with these letters, but they did not have the influence in the Lahou area that he hoped. Many Harristes did become Methodist, but more would not; the stumbling block was the missionaries' insistence on monogamy.

Platt was delighted with the general letter and with the photographs identifying Harris as a Protestant and (since one showed Benoit and Harris shaking hands) a friend of the white missionaries. He sent them to London to have 500 copies made of each so as to be able to pass them out to the village churches.[2] This was carried out and had the desired effect, so that in most areas the independent churches

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1 Benoit's Report.

2 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Platt to Thompson, 26 November 1926.

became Methodist.[1] Platt also intended that the Missionary Society in London should feature the contact with the Prophet in the daily press and in The Foreign Field, as missionary propaganda. Thompson, however, was sure that the facts would disappoint and disillusion many people. "They have never realised how exceedingly crude and elementary was the religion of this man and how great is the work now to be accomplished by the Christian Church."[2]

The rumours about Mark Hayford had been correct. He preached in the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Paris and a young man named Daniel Richard with his fiancée, Mlle. Laure Marzolf, volunteered to join his Ivory Coast Mission. They were married and sailed from Liverpool at the end of February 1927, and when they stopped at Dakar en route, Richard presented his credentials to the Governor and was authorized, as Head of the Mission, to settle at Dabou.[3] Early in April they arrived at Dabou, expecting to find themselves in the midst of a well-rooted field of Baptist missionary activity. Instead, they found themselves a great embarrassment to the Methodists, and they even had to take shelter with a young English missionary, Willis Fletcher.[4] The Methodists persuaded him that there was no room for the Baptists in

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1 B. Holas, "Bref Aperçu sur les Principaux Cultes Syncrétiques de la Basse Côte d'Ivoire," Africa, XXIV, 1, January 1954, p. 57.

2 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Thompson to Platt, 3 January 1927.

3 Letter from Rev. Jacques Blocher, Paris Tabernacle Church, 14 June 1963.

4 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Fletcher to Thompson, 15 April 1927.

the lagoon area, and after consulting with the Tabernacle Church leaders the Richards moved west along the coast. They heard nothing from Hayford, so relied on the Tabernacle congregation for their support and called themselves the Mission Biblique. A line drawn between Fresco and Sassandra divided their territory from that of the Methodists. Here they had no competition, although Harris doctrines had entered the area in much altered forms. For example, in 1920 it had been reported that

> the natives of the baptized tribes now use the bottle of 'holy water' found in their little chapels as a divining rod. It is the 'holy water' which points out the robbers and the witches who have caused the death of certain persons, and the same proceedings, or similar ones, as on the Upper Coast for the walk of the corpse.[1]

Later developments in the Sassandra area included the work of the Prophet Bébé or Loxzema ("the law of God") who destroyed fetishes but who refused to read the Bible given him by Richard and showed no interest in incorporating Christian content into his teachings.[2] During the 1960's his cult was to be found among the Avikams, Aizis, and Alladians east of Grand Lahou, where it was led by "Papa Nouveau." The Déima cult, which developed both as a means of defence and of offence against sorcery and witchcraft, also began in this area, in Gagnoa.[3]

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[1] Abid. X-21-441, Political Report of Chef de Poste, Gagnoa, Cercle de Haut-Sassandra, 30 June 1920.

[2] Cooksey and McLeish, op. cit., pp. 67-8.

[3] D. Paulme, "Une Religion Syncrétique en Côte d'Ivoire," Cahiers d'Études Africaines, III, 9, 1962, pp. 5-90.
Köbben, op. cit., pp. 138-9.

Although Mark Hayford did put in an appearance in Bassam and Dabou in May and June 1928,[1] he found the Methodists firmly in control of the congregations with whom he had treated in 1919 and the Government unfriendly. If Hayford had been able to speak for an organization with resources during his previous visits, and if he could have guaranteed to inculcate obedience to authority and love for France in the Harris converts, and had recruited European colleagues, the Administration might have accepted him. In that case, those who later became Methodists and Catholics, and those who remained aloof as Harristes or who drifted back towards fetishism, might have formed a Native African Church of some importance under his direction.

A greater threat to the Methodist work in its most promising area, Adjoukrou country, emerged when an Alladian, Bodjo Akê, appeared and began to work as a prophet, claiming that he was Harris's son. He baptized in pig's blood and preached polygamy.[2] His teachings were not otherwise extreme, but he criticized practices of the Methodist missionaries severely, saying that they were only woodcutters and that their object in coming to the country and entering any church was to rob people of their money. He composed a defamatory hymn which he sang everywhere, naming every missionary and holding up to particular ridicule

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1 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Platt to Thompson, 21 May 1928 and 20 June 1929.

2 M.M.S.-F.W.A.,Platt to Thompson, 6 December 1926.

de Billy, the French missionary in charge at Dabou.[1] The missionaries brought a case against Akê and he was sentenced to five days in prison and 300 francs fine, the Mission receiving 1 franc in damages. The prison sentence was not enforced and Akê went on as before.

It was evident that the support for Akê came from the vested interests which the missionaries were undermining. Those who did not like Methodist discipline united with certain village chiefs and the old men who were annoyed at seeing their dignities usurped by young catechists from Togo and Dahomey to oppose the missionaries. The returned soldiers, the literates and semi-literates, who had always led opinion and controlled the villages, resented the setting up of schools, the translation of the Scriptures into local languages, and the breaking of the monopoly of knowledge. The Administration was to a certain extent sympathetic, and the Roman Catholic elements were agreeable to opposing Protestantism.

The Methodist Church was attacked on a number of weak points. For instance, when faction split the congregation at Pass (November 1926), the Administration withdrew the church key from the Methodists, on the grounds that as the building had been erected by all the people, its use could not be denied to a section of them. Platt wondered what legal procedure could confirm the grants of village churches to the missionaries. If the Twelve Apostles had not the authority to sign it over, perhaps a

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[1] M.M.S.-F.W.A., Fletcher to Thompson, 5 June 1927.

referendum of the villagers would be necessary. Perhaps too the missionaries had no legal authority over the teaching given in such communal churches.[1] On the whole, the Governor was friendly to Methodist policy, but the Administrateur at Dabou decidedly was not. When he returned the key to the Methodists, he agreed that Akê might be prevented from using the church, but, beyond that, the Methodists could not restrict the villagers who had built it from using it for whatever religious services they chose.

Platt began to agree with his colleagues that the Administration was turning hostile to them in allowing Akê freedom to preach, whereas they had summarily dealt with Harris and the other prophets, and in ruling that Methodist churches must be open to him, while Catholic churches were not. Platt felt that he might have to carry matters to the Governor General, as the situation deteriorated. Twelve village chiefs in the Dabou area (some of them Catholic) petitioned the Governor to bar Methodists from the village churches. In some villages Methodists were forcibly baptized in pig's blood.

The Governor gave a ruling on 26 December 1926 in favour of the Methodists. Chiefs were to be neutral in religious matters, and the Methodists were to have the use of churches where the people who had built them unanimously wished it (though the churches remained the property of those who had built them and not of the Methodists). If

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[1] M.M.S.-F.W.A., Platt to Thompson, 6 December 1926.

the villagers split, the church would have to be shared or the minority compensated for their interest. Only four of the more than sixty churches in the Dabou area were affected, and the Governor ruled that they could be used by another Protestant sect, but not by Aké.[1]

Administrateur Montestruc at Dabou remained hostile to the missionaries who, under Pierre Benoit, who took charge of the Dabou Circuit at this point, argued with him in person and in writing about the illegal closures of the churches at Bécédi and Sikensi. At another village, Gamo, Aké led an attack on the Methodists on 26 and 27 March; the church bell was taken, the church's fabric was damaged, and frightened Protestants were stoned as they were driven from the service. Benoit made a formal complaint of the Administrateur's failure to obey the December ruling and sent a copy to the Governor General.[2]

Lieutenant-Governor Lapalud heard the complaints of the missionaries with great patience when they waited on him at Bingerville, but with no concrete result. Some of the English missionaries wanted to ask the help of the British Consul,[3] but when Thompson heard of this he quite properly warned against bringing the British Government into what was an internal matter of the French authorities.[4]

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1 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Platt to Thompson, 17 January 1927.

2 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Benoit to Secrétaire-Général, 2 April 1927, and to Thompson, 7 April 1927.

3 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Fletcher to Thompson, 5 June 1927.

4 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Thompson to Fletcher, 5 July 1927.

Akê's power was not so tenacious as the missionaries feared. At the end of June 1927 Fletcher re-baptized some 450 inhabitants of Ousserou who had followed Akê for some time.[1] This may not have been in line with universal Methodist polity, but it was admirably politic at that time and place.

By an increasingly militant attitude, the missionaries nearly lost all the fruits of their work and narrowly escaped being condemned and expelled by the civil authorities. Although the English missionaries had accepted the prudent advice of Thompson and had not embroiled the British Consul in their affairs, the French missionaries did not hesitate to pull political strings in Paris. De Billy, while on furlough in the spring of 1927, passed on his report of the hostile attitude of the Administration to the Protestant Senator Eccard (from Strasbourg) who passed it on to Perrier, the Minister of Colonies. He achieved his objective, and Montestruc received a serious reprimand.[2] But this was followed by an investigation which had results profoundly humiliating for Platt as head of the Mission.

On 2 January 1928 the Lieutenant-Governor communicated the findings of the inquiry to Platt. It had been discovered that the Protestants in each Adjoukrou village formed a special group which was more and more inclined to consider itself independent of outside authority,

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1 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Fletcher to Thompson, 27 July 1927.

2 M.M.S.-F.W.A., de Billy to Thompson, 24 August 1927.

including the village chief, who was ignored if he was not one of themselves. His judicial powers were usurped by the Twelve Apostles and this the Administration could not tolerate. The chiefs were its representatives and were to exercise their authority over all their people, whatever their religious differences. If the Protestants obstructed or defied the chiefs, they would be severely punished. As for the European pastors, both French and English, they had adopted very incorrect attitudes and modes of expression towards the Administration. De Billy had interfered several times in matters which he did not understand and which were none of his business. He and his colleagues should limit themselves to religious matters. As for Akê, who took no collections and demanded no construction of churches, which no doubt explained "his great success," he taught a mixture of Christian precepts and "fetish" practices, but had done nothing deserving punishment. Where churches had been damaged by his followers, they should repair them; where Protestants had wrecked his chapels, they should see to their repair.[1]

Platt was dumbfounded by the confessions of his colleagues that they had written imprudent and impertinent letters to the Administrateur, which alone were a sufficient provocation for the closure of the whole Mission in accord with the provisions of the Treaty of St.

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[1] M.M.S.-F.W.A., Lieutenant-Governor, Ivory Coast, to Director, Protestant Missions, Abidjan, 2 January 1928. According to Holas, "Bref Aperçu," op. cit., p. 55, Akê was still active in 1954 from a centre at Petit Bassam.

Germain. From this time on Platt kept all correspondence between the Administration and the Mission in his own hands. He was shocked to discover more breaches of regulations than that--de Billy had opened a station for which the Governor's permission had not been obtained, and when rebuked by the latter, had with difficulty been restrained from making a spirited reply. In the north, Wood and Léthel had opened 27 posts without permission.[1]

Platt took a hard line with his colleagues and the natives soon found that the missionaries would no longer intercede for them with the local officials and so were politically useless. This brought a better feeling between the Mission and the Government, but was a source of dissatisfaction among some of the Methodist villagers.

In 1928 Platt for the first time began to feel discouraged by the obstacles in his way. He wrote bitterly:

> The Gold Coast has not lifted a finger to help us and two very much neglected circuits (Dahomey and Togo) have been able, without any help from any training institution ... to 'stop the gap' whilst our Christian community has jumped from some 5,000 to 43,000 ... we can say that the price of the Ivory Coast was paid in Togo and Dahomey.[2]

Platt resented the relative indifference shown by the W.M.M.S. to the needs of French West Africa. He did not disagree with the Society's decision that the Harris Christians could go on supporting

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1 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Platt to Thompson, 12 January 1928.

2 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Platt to Thompson, 17 April 1928.

their own Ministry as they had before 1924,[1] but he did think the supply of missionaries was too small. Haiderabad with 60,000 Christians had 55 missionaries; French West Africa with 43,000 had only 15.[2]

Unfortunately, these well-founded protests had little effect, and the French West African District continued to be a Cinderella of the W.M.M.S.

From about this time can be dated the last direct intervention of Harris in the Ivory Coast, an intervention which gave encouragement to his converts who had remained independent. In March 1929, a few months before his death, the old Prophet entertained a new embassy from the Ivory Coast. It consisted of Solomon Dagri and John (or Jonas) Ahui, son of Nanghui, the Chief of Petit Bassam. They asked Harris to teach them how to check the epidemic of death sweeping their country. Harris, it is said, looking on the two, said to the younger, Ahui (then about 34), "You shall carry on my work," and he bestowed a Bible and other paraphernalia on him. This was the foundation of the Harris Church which, according to Holas[3] and other observers, has since World War II greatly revived as a third religious force separate from Catholicism and Protestantism and has absorbed most independent inheritors of the Harris tradition.

Ahui claims that he was ordained by Harris as his successor

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1 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Thompson to Platt, 7 December 1926.

2 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Platt to Thompson, 17 April 1928.

3 Holas, Le Séparatisme Religieux, op. cit., p. 270.

on 23 March 1929, and that in the several weeks he remained with him, Harris laid down the rules the church should follow. These were sensible and constructive: schools should be opened for the instruction of the children, prayers were to be in the vernacular, preachers were not to covet the wives of their neighbours, nor to drink alcohol, nor to provoke fights. Apparently nothing was said about polygamy, but it was conceded that if a man's wife were ill or absent he might take a "friend," but when his wife was with him again he had to tell her what had happened and what gifts he had given the friend.[1]

On his return to Petit Bassam Ahui attracted followers and gradually acquired influence over the coastal peoples who were dissatisfied with their churches. He and his people believed that Benoit had concealed a large part of what Harris had told him, including a forecast of the end of French rule in the Ivory Coast.[2] They believed also that Harris had intended to found a Black Church and that this church had been strangled by missionary intervention.

The instructions Harris gave were grouped into ten commandments which were circulated among the independent congregations, and in the course of time a catechism evolved in which their ideas of God, the Church, and Ahui were expounded.

One official difference between the Harris Church and the

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[1] Oral evidence of Prophet Jonas Ahui and his son Paul, including typewritten notes by the latter, Petit Bassam, August 1963.

[2] Jonas Ahui.

Protestant was the emphasis the former put on spiritual healing. Even today they stress that the penalty for sin is sickness. Its cure entails a confession before the pastor and elders of the congregation, who thereupon pray for the sinner. This was, of course, standard practice in many of the village churches before Platt came, and is still, unofficially, often the practice.

Since World War II this neo-Harris "Black Church" has made serious inroads into the older congregations, including the Harris Churches of the Lahou area. After Nandjué's death in 1931, these churches had been ruled by Toba Sokro Pierre, who died in 1942. He headed 82 congregations in the Cercle, 55 in Divo, 12 in Lakota, and 15 in Grand Lahou. His successor, Ledjou N'Drin Gaston, a cousin of the original leader, governed the Church peacefully until in 1949-50 Jonas Ahui appeared in Lahou, claiming to be the true Harris successor, and split the Church.[1] A majority of the faithful followed Ahui--because, according to N'Drin, he did not use the Bible, nor hold it up as a guide, because he laughed at Jesus Christ, made his own rules, and permitted calabash music and dancing. Some of the remaining Harristes became Methodists or Catholics, and only a remnant adhered to the old leader. In 1963 he led some 32 congregations (6 in Lahou, 12 in Divo, 11 in Lakota, and 3 in Gagnoa) under the name of L'Église Harriste Biblique. These churches, which had begun to use the Methodist

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[1] Holas, Le Séparatisme Religieux, op. cit., pp. 289-91, describes this crisis in more detail.

liturgy soon after the death of the first leader, have much in common with the Methodists, save that they permit polygamy, have no sacrament save baptism, and no classes or class money.[1]

The expansion of the independent Harris followers has not lain with these conservative old men but with such prophet-healers as Albert Atcho of Bregbo,[2] whose message is:

> We have already an African prophet, Harris, who told us how to pray to Our God; so why have you gone to the white man's church? Why leave the God of our ancestors?[3]

It seems that many of the Ivoirians have still not found contentment in the Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches.

In January 1930 W.J. Platt announced his resignation as leader of the Methodist Mission. He returned to London to take up another post[4] --not just because his health had deteriorated but because he felt the W.M.M.S. was not making adequate provision for the District nor giving him, as director, sufficient support.[5]

It was a great shock to the clergy who had served under him and, as the Rev. E.K.A. Gaba wrote, if the French no longer suspected

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1 Oral evidence and church records of Ledjou N'Drin Gaston, Grand Lahou, August 1963.

2 Atcho and his healing centre at Bregbo near Abidjan is discussed in Rouch, op. cit.

3 Oral evidence of Methodists at Alladian Quarterly Meeting, Île Deblay, August 1963. The Alladian converts of Atcho made no provision for a graveyard, since they would never die. When one of them did die, they buried him secretly among the Methodists.

4 He became a Secretary (Equatorial Africa) of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

5 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Thompson to H.L. Bishop, 17 June 1930.

the Wesleyan Mission of being "a secret agency of England in the French colonies to entice the Natives away to British rule," it was due to Platt's prudence.[1]

In the latter part of the previous year Harris had died at Cape Palmas. Benoit pronounced the Methodist judgment when he wrote:

> Harris is, in part, a figure from the Old Testament, but there is more than that in him. There is even more in him than in John the Baptist, who was not the last page of the Old Testament but the first page of the New. Harris well represents what a black Christian prophet could be. He symbolizes for the native of the bush all that revelation can be for him. He carries the law and grace to the heart of societies so little evolved as those of the Africans.[2]

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1 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Gaba to Thompson, 12 February 1930.

2 M.M.S.-F.W.A., Benoit to Walker, 5 May 1929.

CHAPTER VII

THE HARRIS MOVEMENT IN RETROSPECT

The year 1930, to all intents and purposes, marks the end of the development of the Harris Movement. Several decades later religious movements drawing varied amounts of inspiration from the original Movement, so-called neo-Harris cults, appeared and complicated the social organization of the Ivory Coast. These movements do not really fall within the scope of this study.

The story of Harris's success and its subsequent evolution in the two colonies he visited seems to invite three principal questions: why did he have such an unqualified success? Why were there such marked variations in the religious development of the various groups of converts? And finally, to what extent was the subsequent history of the Movement in line with the intentions of Harris and the aspirations of the converts?

The answer to the first is, most simply, that he was offering people what they really desired but dared not take by themselves: in an era of drastic change they wanted freedom from attendance on spirits no longer able to protect them, freedom from taboos which hampered the business of everyday life, freedom from the fear of injury and death from people inhabited by malevolent spirits, which threatened on every hand. All those who were converted saw in Harris a personality strong

enough to defy the spirits on their behalf, though after his departure some groups combined Harris's teachings with the animism he condemned, or tried to use the new faith as a vehicle of political expression. The majority, however, especially in the coastal regions of the Cercle des Lagunes, used the Harris teachings as the basis for a wholesale religious reformation which turned its back squarely on the past and fitted its adherents to live with the present. For them it was what anthropologists have termed a re-vitalization movement.

As indicated in the introduction, colonial societies, barred from finding political solutions to their problems and in most cases unable to view their situation objectively, instinctively turn to religion for the answers. There is not likely to be such a revolutionary act as the adoption of a new religion until the traditional one is completely discredited. While the old beliefs seem able to cope with life's problems, and these problems change little from generation to generation, the beliefs will be respected, no matter how much suffering they impose on individuals and groups. Not until they are seen to be unsatisfactory and intolerable, and the spirits too weak to perform their duty to their descendants and worshippers, will the system be repudiated. The cargo cults of Melenesia are an example of this; they came into being when people felt they were being cheated of their share of the desirable material things given to white men, as revealed to them during World War II.

Christianity itself is a classic example of a re-vitalization movement which conquered the ancient Mediterranean world, not only because it offered a new God and cult (others offered the same), but with them a new, purposeful society, a reason for existing and for meeting life with confidence. Today in the West, and perhaps in Africa too, secular solutions are sought at times of social crisis. During the colonial period, however, the impetus towards social change came from religious revelation.

The Ivory Coast at the time Harris entered it was going through a time of particular crisis. New problems were cropping up as French rule tightened its hold. Witches were prevalent, people who claimed power over the spirits were using their powers for evil, and there was a deep dissatisfaction because the traditional gods of the rocks, hills, rivers, and groves had not protected their worshippers from conquest. Every year the weakness of the gods was demonstrated anew as taxes were levied, young men were taken away for forced labour or as recruits, and the necessity for raising cash crops was dinned into the peoples' ears by the Administration. The cult of Mando, resorted to as a new religion, became such a scourge that the French found many native allies to suppress it, particularly in the most progressive regions. The Christian God did not take Mando's place. The Administration regarded Christianity as a superstition quite as outmoded as any the Coast already offered, and the Catholic missionaries

were treated with such contempt that no Ivoirian could have supposed that they represented the spiritual arm of European power.

Without offering any religious basis for a new society, the colonial Administration put increasing pressures on the old society and so multiplied its tensions without offering any relief. In 1914 alone, during the tours of the officials, the lagoon area of the Cercle des Lagunes was subjected to many suggestions and orders. The inhabitants of Abidjan Rural were lectured on hygiene, public health, the cleanliness of their huts and villages, and heard the accustomed exhortations to make new plantations for cash crops.[1] The Chef de Poste at Dabou, on his visits through Adjoukrou country in January, Abidji country in February, and along the Alladian coast in March and April, gave each group advice on the growing and harvesting of their cash crops. Where the Adjoukrous had collective oil-palm plantations, as at Toupa, Débrimou, and Bouboury, he gave instructions on the correct preparation of the oil to bring the best price. As a result, the firms reported that impurities in the oil brought to them dropped from 15% to 2% in four months.[2] The tax around Dabou and Abidjan was paid so promptly in January 1914 that it was cited by the officials as proof of the increasing wealth of the inhabitants.[3]

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1 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Abidjan Rural, January 1914.

2 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, January 1914.

3 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, January 1914, comment of Administrateur.

The Abidjis had just begun, at this time, to take an interest in their palms and were being encouraged to carry the oil, along the new road built by their forced labour, to the trading factories on the Ebrié Lagoon. They had kola-nut trees which they had never tried to utilize commercially and the visiting Chef de Poste pointed out that these were a valuable commodity which, if harvested, would fetch them good money. On the same visit he showed them how to grow cocoa and promised to send them 4,000 plants for the beginning of March.[1]

On the sandy Alladian coast, where hundreds of coco-nut palms grew, the natives were shown how to care for the palms which, they were told, could yield them a good income, and how to prepare copra. Until then they had been ignorant of the commercial possibilities of their coco-nuts. Already, in the stretch of coast between Adjué and Jacqueville, the possibilities of kola-nuts were being realized, and the Chef de Poste noticed many small trees being tended; only a short time before "the Dioulas, Hausas, or Bambaras, the peddlers who went through the region," had been the only ones to value this produce.[2]

Everywhere in the subdivision of Dabou cocoa plants were demanded by the Chiefs, new plantations were set out, and under the watchful eye of the Chef de Poste the cocoa plants developed. In June some villages were discovered weeding their oil-palm plantations of

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1 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, February 1914.

2 Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, March and April 1914.

their own volition, having learned that this was essential for obtaining a good harvest. Only the year before it would have been almost impossible to get them to see the necessity; in 1914 at least one village did see it, and its example was so infectious that surrounding villages began to do the same.[1]

In contrast to the people around the Lagoon, the forest people around Agboville, "pacified" in 1909 and 1910, were in 1914 progressing very slowly towards civilization, as the Administration saw it. The reports of the Chef de Poste indicate his frustration. Early in the year he wrote:

> Although finally and steadily entered on the way of labour, the Abbey still needs to be supported, directed, and even stimulated in his first efforts. The Abbey region, exceptionally favoured by Nature, is a source of varied riches. But the native can satisfy his own needs without making the least effort to derive a profit. We cannot and ought not to ignore this inutilization of resources, and we shall know better than to be satisfied with a feeble native exploitation. Therefore we ought to apply to the Abbeys, in the widest sense, the economic politics of obligation. Our duty is to push the natives without bullying or coercion, but with a tenacious patience, towards the intensive and rational exploitation of the wealth of the region.[2]

The Chef de Poste felt rewarded for his pressure on people to weed their plantations when the oil palm harvest amounted to 29 tonnes in 1914, compared with 6 the year before. During June and July, however, villagers were discovered stealing away to <u>campements</u> in the forest, and when seeking out these and destroying them the Chef de Poste dis-

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[1] Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Dabou, June 1914.

[2] Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Agboville, February 1914.

covered, lurking in the depths of the forest, an old chief who had never surrendered after the 1910 rebellion and kept it alive by encouraging hostility to the French in the villages around.[1]

From these examples of the prying, pushing, and ubiquitous presence of the French Administration, along with those cited earlier, it cannot be doubted that there was taking place a sharp-edged confrontation of cultures in this region, particularly after Angoulvant had assumed office and narrowed the field of independent activity left to the native population. This was the situation in which old standards, practices, and beliefs seemed to have lost their ability to guarantee peace of mind and stability. Increasingly, the Ivoirians were becoming part of a money economy, exchanging plantation crops for European luxuries which were soon classed as necessities. With this material change came a malaise in society; the ready adoption of new cults, such as that of Mando, indicates the widespread feeling of insecurity. The frequent poisoning of vigorous young men, whether by the priests of Mando, by evil fetish practitioners, or in tests for witchcraft, gives the impression that a death-wish lay on the people.

The colonized society of the regions to which Harris came was at a point of crisis by the beginning of 1914. The people were desperate for some revelation which would explain life in its new context and would open up an avenue of initiative. As an Administrateur

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[1] Abid. X-46-25, Report of Chef de Poste, Agboville, July 1914.

later said of the success Harris enjoyed, "The people were ripe for such preaching; they were ready to listen to anyone."[1]

Anthropologists have charted the progressive deterioration of a society under pressure or invasion to the crisis point at which the religious basis of the society is unable to sustain the social order. Under such stress the originally stable society moves into a stage of cultural distortion in which all the signs of deterioration may be found. Such trends as a falling birth-rate, the dispersal of populations, the suppression of traditional customs, and a growing alcoholism lead to self-reproach, depression, and fear. At this point the culture is near death, and it is out of this desperate position that a "prophet" may emerge to launch a movement of healing or re-vitalization. He expounds a new view of himself, his group, their culture, the foreigners, and the situation. He gathers followers, sets up an organization, and adapts the new elements he wishes to introduce to the realities of the situation. Thus the culture is altered and a new period of stability under an altered system of cultural references ensues.[2]

Professor Wallace sees Christianity, the religious reform of Akhenaten in ancient Egypt, and the Vailala Madness in New Guinea as examples of such re-vitalization movements. Most helpful for an

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[1] Walker, op. cit., p. 12.

[2] Wallace, op. cit., p. 266. Also, Kübben, op. cit., p. 150.

understanding of the Ivory Coast experience is the account given by Dr. Margaret Mead of the incredible cultural transformation carried out by the Manus of the Admiralty Islands during the twenty-five years between 1928 and 1953.[1] When Dr. Mead first visited these people in the South Pacific they were quite untouched by Christianity. They were an active people who had developed an elaborate economic system which regulated marriage. The spiritual incentive to obey social rules was provided by the "Sir Ghost," the most recently dead member of the household. His skull was kept in the rafters of the house and his spirit meted out punishments to wicked members of the household. This bore heavily on those who broke the puritanically strict sex code, which not only prohibited all sex life outside of marriage but hedged the whole sex relationship with taboos. Marriages were arranged by the heads of families and were the occasions of great exchanges of wealth and the laying up of obligations reaching far into the future. These obligations were the mainspring of the economic system, but for the individuals tied by them they were a source of hatred. Betrothed while small children, husbands and wives never saw or spoke to one another before marriage, and hated each other before their first meeting. Within marriage this hatred continued.

The Manus became aware that foreigners had a code of ethics not based on suspicion and finance, probably from the fact that

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[1] M. Mead, New Lives for Old, London, 1956, p. 58.

Australians, the only white people with whom they had contact, gave them medicine and bound their cuts without charging them.[1] In 1929 the Manus decided to become Roman Catholics, their explicit reasons being that they wished to become literate (and thus increase their chances of material betterment) and because

> The idea of confessing one's sins to a single person instead of to an entire community was an alluring one to a people whose confessions were now blazoned forth with drum beats to the entire community.[2]

They planned the last great pagan feast they would hold years in advance, knowing that the Mission would forbid it in future; at the same moment every householder would toss out the tyrannical Sir Ghost, who not only enforced the ethical code on the household but protected it from the Ghosts in the other households.

> ... any household without a Sir Ghost was in a desperately vulnerable state, but if everyone threw out their Sir Ghosts together, then it would be safe to welcome in the new order. The Pater would come, people would be christened, receive Christian names, and there would be a resident catechist and a school, and they would learn to read and write and keep accounts.[3]

It can be seen that this complete changeover in the spiritual basis of their society was not a prophetic movement in any way, but an extremely rational act of recognizing that the alteration of some of the factors in their lives would lead to happier and better lives.

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1 Mead, op. cit., p. 87.

2 Ibid., p. 92.

3 Ibid., p. 93.

When the Manus had safely become Catholics they soon became dissatisfied again, for they missed the under-pinning the old religion had given to their economic and social lives. With the passage of the Japanese and then the Americans through their area they were impressed by the spectacle of power such as they had never imagined. Before the Manus had a chance to become caught up in one of the cargo cults sweeping the South Pacific area, they were brought into the rational modern world by a man named Palian. In so far as Palian had undergone an experience which enabled him to see what factors in the society needed to be changed to afford its members a better life, and in so far as this gave him the zeal to carry his message to them everywhere, he must be counted as a prophet.[1]

Palian told his people that they must unite. Tribal rivalries and hatreds must be given up, specialized skills and possessions must be shared. The fishing peoples would show the landsmen where and how to fish, while the landsmen gave some of their land to the fishermen. He had a sense of divine mission, but more than that, the ability to plan rationally and effectively to gain his ends, and most important, in the "colonial" context in which he lived, with the administration in the hands of Australians, he had the ability to work with the white officials and to learn what they had to teach in the way of methods and goals.

When Margaret Mead stayed with the Manus in 1953 she saw Palian

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[1] Mead, op. cit., p. 90.

at work and she saw the transformation which had come over the people--people whom she, an anthropologist, had never expected to see become part of the larger world during her lifetime, or for centuries. They had leaped a gap of centuries in 25 years and were psychologically part of the modern world, ready and willing to learn the techniques of looking after themselves in it.

This account of innovation is a happy one because of the personality of the leader, Palian, but there have been other innovational movements with varying degrees of success.

The popular acceptance of Christianity in any culture is probably prompted by the desire for a changed social situation, as it was in fact when the first Apostles made their first converts. Amongst the Polynesians, for example, we find the people of Hawaii, led by the Chief's mother and the High Priest, throwing off the network of taboos and religious restrictions which had evidently just become too heavy to be borne.[1]

Similarly, among the Maoris in New Zealand, European infiltration and pressure put their practices of "war, slavery, and cannibalism in a new perspective, and they found that many tiresome religious conventions no longer had meaning."[2] In both Hawaii and New Zealand Christianity was used as a vehicle for making the social reforms necessary. It provided the necessary spiritual sanction for men of a certain

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[1] H.M. Wright, New Zealand, 1769-1840, Early Years of Christian Contact, Cambridge, Mass., 1959, p. 179.

[2] Ibid., p. 180.

type to feel that, by God's grace, they saw through the problems facing their society and must effect a change.

The parallels in these examples with the Harris Movement are evident, and there can be no doubt that the need of the Ivoirians for a religious change grew out of a universally human condition of a society under pressure. The question still remains, however, as to why it was not the Catholic missionaries who provided or sponsored the leadership, as have missionaries in other parts of the world. The brief period of their work in the country is not the whole answer. It has been shown in this study that the Catholic Fathers were extraordinarily ineffective. Their message was essentially the same as Harris's: "Destroy your fetishes, worship God, and obey His commandments." Yet though on occasion people had listened to the advice of the missionaries and the officials and had destroyed their fetish objects, they were afraid to abandon them completely. They were not convinced by anything the white man told them of the powerlessness of the spirits, for they felt that they knew better. They were as anxious as the Maoris or Manus to cast aside the supernatural beings who filled the background of their lives with fear, who devoured their wealth in offerings and bribes, who restricted their actions so that they could hardly labour four consecutive days without flouting strict taboos. Since the spirits had forfeited their position by failing to give protection against the French, it might have been thought that they

could be defied with impunity. This was not the case; villages which had destroyed their protective objects had been punished as death struck amongst them until they had bought new protection.

Made cautious by such experiences, the Ivoirian villagers would refuse to abandon the pantheon of spirits and powers which Harris associated with the Devil[1] until he had proved himself the stronger. If he, an African like them, could safely defy the Spirit World, then there was hope for ordinary people. Harris did defy these powers and the death they could supposedly command. There is no indication that he was indisposed even for a day on his march along the coast. His escape could not be attributed to an inoffensive manner. He came with a direct challenge to the powers of the spirits and those who practised sorcery. The first reaction to him was amazement that he should be so foolhardy, but with time he built up around himself an aura of awe and fear which the force of rumour exaggerated to overwhelming proportions. Marty described a typical scene of Harris at work with people terrified of his cross. The wizards are "seized with convulsions, they try to flee, but cannot, they roll on the ground screaming."[2] This was perhaps what happened when the reputation of the Prophet was secure, but at the beginning his cross had no effect over those who had never heard of its

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[1] According to oral evidence at Bassam, Harris would say, "Satan, get out of you" to those with evil spirits, as he struck their heads with his Bible.

[2] Marty, op. cit., p. 15.

power. It has been shown that when he first passed through the Ivory Coast going eastwards, he shook the dust of many villages from his feet in anger that he was regarded simply as a madman. It was in the vicinity of Axim that he established his reputation, and it was on his return to the Ivory Coast that such scenes as the one Marty described could take place.

Once Harris was associated with such events as the death of Administrateur Cécaldi and the burning of the freighter at Grand Bassam, he was credited with possessing powers beyond those any native spirit or magician had ever used, and it was classed with his first notable miracle, the burning of the hidden fetish objects at Ebonou. He was in no doubt that he had called down fire from Heaven on the fetishes, and boasted to Benoit in 1926 of his ability to do so. In 1914 he boasted to Father Gorju that he could make rain, and this has been claimed by his converts. Angoulvant believed his powers were basically hypnotic; perhaps it was mass-hypnotism which made people believe the sun moved in the sky and that rain fell at a gesture from his staff. This incident is remniscent of the account of four native Christians in the Lower Congo who in 1921 had gone to observe Simon Kimbangu at work. "Look," cried Simon, "the sun and the moon are fighting!" The four Christians looked up but saw nothing unusual.[1]

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[1] P.H.J. Lerrigo, "The 'Prophet Movement' in Congo," The International Review of Missions, XI, April 1922, p. 274.

Undoubtedly Harris inspired awe and confidence when those who believed themselves possessed by evil spirits or those who consciously used the spirits for evil fell into convulsions, showed all the signs of dissociation, and were then quietened by him and became normal members of the community and ardent supporters of the new faith. His power to reach these people depended partly on what rumour had led them to expect from him, partly on the impression he made in person with his complete self-confidence and electrifying voice. His practice of singing hymns to the rhythmic clash of calabashes, or even the sound of the calabashes alone, was sufficient to induce a complete loss of conscious control in those whose minds were troubled. In that sense Harris certainly was employing hypnosis, and his followers today in Ghana consistently rely on the rhythm of the calabashes to induce a state of possession in their patients.

Many of these people, regarded by others as witches, carried a heavy load of guilt for crimes they feared they had committed. One can hardly doubt that with them the belief that they were the hosts of evil spirits who united with others to commit crimes was, as Margaret Field has discovered in Ghana, the symptom of a state of nervous depression. In Ashanti today these people seek out one of the new healing shrines, make offerings, and confess the crimes they imagine they have done. When the attending priest is satisfied that the confession is complete, he fines and purifies the patient, and the latter goes happily

away, if the treatment has succeeded.[1] Harris inspired as much confidence as any shrine, performed the same function for the sufferer, heard a confession (though it may have come as incomprehensible babble), and then bestowed the baptism which was a remission of sins.[2]

When Harris had shown himself stronger than the whole pantheon of gods and spirits, he was in a position to bring about the conversion of the people without any reference to his personal magnetism or oratory. Once it was certain that the religion he brought was more powerful than the old one, he could delegate the work of conversion to the clerks, who by themselves would never have won a hearing. When this is appreciated, the fact that a vast proportion of the Harris converts never actually saw the Prophet becomes understandable. Only along the coastal strip and at Bingerville and Bonoua can one say with certainty that Harris himself preached, and even in that coastal strip it was his deputies who baptized most people. Goodman, Nivri, Brown, Thomas, Reffell and others planted the faith deeply where Harris had come like a plough breaking the sod.

The Catholic Fathers had as splendid an opportunity to convert in Harris's footsteps as the despised clerks, and their failure to do so was for the same reason that they had failed before his coming. Harris gave the baptism immediately; the European missionaries would

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[1] Field, op. cit., p. 150 ff.

[2] Holas, "Bref Aperçu," op. cit., p. 56.

give it only after a long period of instruction and testing. Harris told the Fathers, when he met them at Bingerville, that the water of the baptism and the touching of his bamboo cross preserved the converts against the fury of the abandoned spirits. One can imagine the knowing smiles the Fathers exchanged at such a display of naïve credulity. They could not understand that here was the secret of their failure. The acceptance of Christ which they offered gave no protection from the spirits, witches, and feticheurs; it only made them more malignant and dangerous.

Harris did his best to bring the Catholic Church into his work. He brought a large crowd of his converts to the Mission at Bingerville for a Catholic baptism. The Fathers failed the test. They would not baptize the eager people, and advised Harris against doing so. He ignored this advice and administered the baptism himself at another place.[1] Later, Father Gorju complained that since Harris's baptism was valid in form, it was a great headache for the Mission. It did not occur to him that without that first baptism most of the Harris converts would never have dared to come to the missionaries. The great increase in their number of catechumens from 1915 onwards came from the group which, protected by Harris's baptism, ran no risk in taking instruction.[2]

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[1] Hartz, op. cit., p. 123.

[2] Oral evidence from several sources, including that of Boniface Tchikpadan (a Catholic), Songon M'Brathé. Also see John Ahui's account in D. Desanti, Côte d'Ivoire, l'Atlas des Voyages, Lausanne, 1962, p. 70.

It is likely that they regarded their baptism by the Fathers, when it finally came, as less important than the first. Even in 1925 the Methodist missionaries found that people felt they must be baptized before they tried to become Christians, as otherwise they had no power to change themselves.[1]

Clearly, Harris succeeded in driving out the traditional religion by discrediting the strength of the spirits who held the majority of people, or at any rate those who led public opinion, in unwilling bondage. He shared his strength through his rite of baptism, and he shared his power to baptize with disciples. There was a clear impression in certain areas that the baptismal water he used embodied his power, and when Victor Nivri travelled all the way to Brown at Ebonou, it was to get some of the holy water as much as to be instructed in its application. Presumably, ordinary water could be added to the holy water without diluting its strength.

The stature to which Harris had attained, even before he returned to the Ivory Coast, made it unnecessary for his disciples to begin work by making their own impression of power. They apparently had no difficulty in driving out evil spirits and healing just as Harris had done. However, they were untrained individuals, and this helps to explain the variations which grew up in the village churches as they were formed.

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[1] de Billy, op. cit., p. 40.

Another factor in both the universal acceptance of the new faith and the differences it developed in different places was that everywhere it was the older men, the spiritual and civic leaders, who sanctioned the religious revolution. Since most of the people who sought out Harris or his disciples were these men, who were more interested in spiritual matters than ordinary villagers, their acceptance of the Harris faith, of which they were appointed Preachers and Apostles, left the majority of villagers with no option but to follow them. They, after all, were the authorities on matters of faith, and when they announced that the spirits had withdrawn and that the objects associated with them should be destroyed,[1] the only dissenters from this policy were the feeble old men who were fast becoming ancestors themselves and resented the fact that they would not be revered after death.

The actual teachings of Harris seem to have evolved between the time of his arrival in late 1913 and his expulsion at the beginning of 1915 from a few brief commands to a substantial body of instructions and prohibitions. In the later period he gave detailed rulings pertaining to specific social problems. In the Cercle de Lahou, in 1913, he simply gave two instructions: "God is all-powerful, so you must burn your fetishes," and "Love one another." In Apollonia he ordered people to join a church and obey its rules. He prohibited the custom of keeping menstruating women segregated and restricted in their movements. Since

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[1] Oral evidence of Methodist Preacher at Songon M'Brathé, old men at Abidjan-Koute and Adjamé-Bingerville, and A. Roux, a former Methodist missionary, Paris, March 1963.

the origin of this custom was to prevent the defiling of an area sacred to a spirit or god, it was only reasonable to end it when the gods had been driven away.

Presumably, Harris took care to learn the laws of the people, as at Axim, then urged his reforms. In Apollonia he made it clear that he condemned extravagant funeral customs, and he freed newly-widowed people from the taboos which set them apart. He expected libations and sacrifices to cease, in accordance with his first command. His emphasis on a strict Sabbath observance and his dislike of smoking seem to be evidence of his Methodist upbringing. His work there was followed by the improved cleanliness of the villages and a greater interest in schooling, but it is not recorded that he spoke directly about these things.

A few months later the Ivory Coast Administration learned that Harris taught people to believe in one God, abandon the fetishes, observe Sunday, commit no adultery, be obedient to the Government, use alcohol temperately, and finally, to work hard for six days of the week. These rules were the basis for the re-vitalization of Ivoirian society.

Harris did not make any special mention of the virtues of polygamy in the Ivory Coast, but he certainly regarded it as an African institution which needed to be reformed rather than abolished. In public utterances he made it clear that love, respect, and justice were to be kept in mind in polygynous relationships. If a man had a

number of wives who lived unhappily together, then he was to choose one and send the others away.

His rule for Sunday rest was described by Marty as "an almost Jewish observance,"[1] and Gorju claimed that for fear of the penalties Harris had threatened, some terrorized villages would take no food on that day.[2] Neither authority seems to notice how closely the Sunday taboos follow those enforced on the special days of the old gods, yet with a difference. While there was to be no work on Sunday save in cases of dire necessity, food might be gathered, and if the amount brought home was in excess of actual needs, it was to be distributed to others free of charge. The same charity was found in his condemnation of theft, for he said a hungry person might eat from another's garden so long as he confessed to the owner or announced it in church.

There was to be one place for a burying ground, and the dead were treated reverently and with prayers. On the other hand, at Grand Lahou as at Axim, he forbade the elaborate funerals where the corpse was wrapped in many cloths given by friends, with gold dust sprinkled between the layers. This ruling was particularly necessary at Lahou and was naturally resented by the old.

Many of Harris's rules were obviously prompted by a respect for the dignity of womanhood and of decency in general. No doubt his

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[1] Marty, op. cit., p. 16.

[2] Gorju, "Un Prophète," op. cit., p. 114.

prohibition on lying with a woman in the open, even one's wife, was motivated by these feelings. So were his commands concerning the nubile maidens and the widows of Grand Lahou. The maidens would go about clad only in a little apron, thus arousing the men to compete with each other in offering a high bride-price to her family. Harris said a girl might appear like this only during the first week of her womanhood. On the first Sunday after this week she was to appear in church neatly dressed, where prayers would be said for her, and thenceforth she would clothe herself modestly.[1] Widows had also been forced to be seen practically naked and with their heads shaven. Harris forbade this, and said that a woman need not return to her husband's family the cloths he had given her, but only the gold and silver.

Probably the spirit behind Harris's teachings was applied to problems after his expulsion, and it is not necessary to attribute all the laws of his converts to the man himself. Administrateur Corbière, who followed the development of the new religion in his Cercle (Lahou) with great interest, listed in 1916 the commandments then being preached to the faithful. They were:

> Love God and thank him on all occasions.
> Love your neighbour and do him no harm.
> Love your wives and do not treat them like captives.
> Respect the wives of others.
> Do not bear false witness.
> Do not steal.
> Do not be jealous of your neighbour.
> Instead of coveting your neighbour's possessions, work to earn them for yourself.

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[1] Old men at Lahou.

Consider suicide an accident and pity the one who cut short his days; bury him decently.[1]
Abortion is a crime punished by God.
If your wife dies, offer gifts to those who bring their condolences, but do not shave your head.
Rest on Sunday.
While polygamy is not forbidden, monogamy is recommended.[2]

Since the most harmful part of the old religious beliefs was the terror inspired by witches and their death-dealing machinations, it would seem that the teaching of Harris which gave the greatest immediate relief was putting the responsibility for death squarely on the person who died. He forbade the custom of dancing through the streets with a corpse to see whether it would lead to its murderer, and as he baptized, he said the baptism was "like knives placed on a table" and "a man who disobeys me is like a man who cuts his own throat." He explained that disobedience would bring on an illness which would end in death unless a full confession were made to the church leaders, who would then offer prayers of intercession.

His words were taken seriously, and the tradition grew up that confession had to be made before Sunday. Subsequently, many confessions of wrongdoing were made, usually of illicit sexual intercourse or of having used witchcraft to become an animal and ravage a neighbour's gardens. The Apostles prayed over the sinners, but were often unsuccessful

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[1] Among the Bantu, according to Willoughby, op. cit., p. 389, suicides, denied full burial rites, were believed to be doomed to wander in the waste places of the world, cold and hungry. Presumably, there was the same belief in the Ivory Coast.

[2] Grivot, op. cit., p. 84.

in saving them.[1]

Fear of the consequences of disobeying the commands of Harris swept away the traditional religion of the lower Ivory Coast and replaced it by the one which he and his disciples taught.

It has been demonstrated in the preceding pages that the Harris converts deviated considerably in their response to his teachings. The Agnis of Sanwi used the new faith only as a means of defying the French. The Didas found in it a justification for refusing to pay taxes and for resisting French claims to suzerainty over their country. In similar fashion, the inland Abbeys, Attiés, and Agnis thought the new religion would relieve them of the colonial burden. The Gold Coast converts form no easy pattern; some of them probably had these same expectations, that life would become simple again and the European would cease to disturb it. Others saw with the people of the coastal regions of the Cercle de Bassam, Cercle de Lahou, and especially with most of the Ebriés, Adjoukrous, Abidjis, and Alladians of the Cercle des Lagunes, that the clock could not be turned back, that the European presence and the modern commerce which accompanied it had come to stay, and that the new faith would help them to cope with it. These were the people who ultimately, in both colonies, joined the two missionary-dominated churches or remained independent, but definitely repudiating the traditional

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[1] This section is largely based on oral evidence, chiefly of Mathieu Adobi and of old men at Lahou, Tefredji, and Abidjan-Koutê.

religion of the past. The Harris Church at Lahou was such a one.

There is no doubt that Harris viewed himself, at the beginning, simply as a John the Baptist come to rouse the people and lead them to the European or African clergy who would instruct them fully. In the Gold Coast the Churches did rise to the challenge; their lack of complete success remains a mystery. The evidence suggests that the people were not as a whole ready, perhaps because of their own nature, or perhaps because of the nature of their colonial experience, to abandon their belief in the intimate relation between man and the supernatural. In the Ivory Coast in the months before his expulsion Harris must have realized that the missionaries were not going to be able to play their part. The French Fathers were not as popular as their colleagues in the adjacent colony, and the Protestant clergy had limited their acquaintance to their own Sierra Leonean-Fanti communities. So Harris predicted that Bible-bearing messengers would come, and that people must be patient. He could not have expected to be ejected so suddenly, and he must have been confident that sooner or later Protestant missionaries would appear to help him. In the unforeseen circumstances which did ensue, the people were left to develop their own religious institutions with the help of every self-styled prophet or evangelist who saw them as a source of money. The fact that they were on a constant lookout for the 'messengers" made them easy prey for such men.

In the years when these converts were on their own, new vested interests, based on the new religion, solidified. Not surprisingly, the dominant groups were largely those formerly based on the traditional religion destroyed by Harris. Despite the inroads made here and there by such opportunists as Dô and Yessu, most villages remained solidly under the control of their traditional leaders, and among them Platt found all the inhabitants ready to become Protestant en masse.

M. Jean Rouch, one of the most recent critics of the role of the missionaries vis-à-vis Harris, has suggested that their errors include the sterile rivalry between Catholic and Protestant (so unlike the Prophet's own attitude of friendship to both), an European organization and type of worship, a reliance on foreign African catechists, and the suppression of polygamy.[1]

The evidence already cited suggests that these criticisms are based on a very incomplete picture of events in the years between 1915 and 1924. The rivalry between Catholic and Protestant grew out of the social flux in many villages consequent on breaking the dead weight of ancestral sanctions by Harris, making it possible for youth to dispute power with their elders. Catholicism, Protestantism, or the religion of a prophet was chosen in defiance of the social formation improvised by the village leaders on the basis of the religion they chose, normally

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[1] Rouch, op. cit., p. 163.

"Harrisism." The Catholic and Methodist missionaries could not avoid being dragged into village rivalries, but they did not inaugurate them. The Methodists, unfortunately, brought division to villages where it had not existed by alienating, in all innocence, important village leaders.[1] This sometimes happened, for example, when the Twelve Apostles were appointed without sufficient enquiry in villages which had never had them.

The Methodist insistence that the ethical instruction they offered be linked with western cultural institutions may be termed a mistake if the object sought was to gather in all the converts. The fundamental demand that all church members be monogamists and that there be periods of trial for membership, the payment of Class Dues ("You have come to eat our money," said the people[2]) and other aspects of Methodist discipline were resented by people who yet wished to learn from the white missionaries. They were offered the hard choice of advancing through accepting a Catholic or Wesleyan way of life and of worship, or of remaining stationary, more or less, as Harristes. Neither group of missionaries was offering a church tailored to the Ivory Coast, and Platt himself, when reproached with the rigidity of the Methodist approach and the suggestion that a perfectly acceptable native Christian Church had been reduced to dependency, replied that

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1 A. Roux.

2 Oral evidence of Rev. Rowland Joiner, Abidjan, August 1963.

without the aid of the missionaries, especially in providing education, the next generation would have ceased to make any attempt to follow their fathers and would have become Catholic. Platt believed that these people wished to be members of the Methodist Church already in existence in the country, and that he had a duty to save that Church and to bring them in.

For this task he was an ideal person, and his methods were broadminded and effective. But in retrospect it can be seen that he and the Methodist Church would today be regarded as more generous and perhaps more effective messengers of the Gospel if they had viewed the Harris congregations as forming a spontaneously formed church of the kind Roland Allen was at that time thinking through and preparing to advocate in print,[1] a church which missionaries had no right to go in and possess. If the Methodist missionaries could have shepherded their own Fanti people in the chief towns, offering the others advice, religious instruction, education, and medical services, but not stipulating that they become Wesleyans and fit into that mould, they might have helped to heal the fissures in the social situation, instead of accentuating them by building up yet another institution demanding a sectarian loyalty.

The bringing of vast numbers of young catechists from Togo and Dahomey was certainly a challenge to the faith of the new Methodists.

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[1] R. Allen, The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes which Hinder It, London, 1927.

The Harris converts were accustomed to the rule of the older age groups in village life. To be suddenly faced with this contingent of strange young men taking command and administering discipline was a bitter pill. These young catechists were themselves instructed in only the rudiments of religion and literacy, and the knowledge they had of their own deficiencies probably made them all the more jealous of the authority put into their hands. So the independence of the congregations and their own preachers was effectively undermined and suppressed.

People were disappointed most of all when the Methodist missionaries did not put an end to all oppression. They saw very soon that, far from protecting them against the Administration, the white men counseled them to be patient, to pardon offences, and to pray for those who persecuted them. When it became evident that they treated all men alike and would not "flatter the powerful nor soften the hard angles of Christian morality for them,"[1] and that they demanded a reform in the frequent feasts, an end to "impure" dancing, and that all learn to read the Bible, the older men drifted into opposition and it was in that way that the Prophet Bodjo Aké found support in his attempt to drive Methodism out of the Adjoukrou villages. Aké was a natural ally of reactionary chiefs, and as late as 1937 the Methodists found it impossible to penetrate a certain area where the Chief called himself head of the Akéist church, and would not allow his sub-chiefs to favour

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[1] de Billy, op. cit., p. 39.

any other churches.[1]

Platt believed that the rivalry offered by a militant Protestantism was actually the push the Fathers needed. He said:

> At our arrival the priests stormed, they literally raved and bullied the people. Now, however, they are putting their energy into work. They realize that we have come to stay. A battle they considered half won is only beginning, and it is a sad misfortune that to them all non-Catholics are non-Christians. Their forces are being strengthened, they are appealing in France for men, though they are already many times more numerous than we. They have money too. For the first time they are opening schools, getting modern means of transport, and printing literature. They have never worked so hard during their existence. Some historians would tell us that the Reformation saved the life of Romanism in Europe, and a similar strange phenomenon has been manifest on the Ivory Coast. From their usual missionary method of mixed marriages --where the Evangelical always gives and Rome always takes--to open and public abuse of our Africans and ourselves, their propaganda has been tenfold intensified since our arrival.[2]

The foregoing evidence leaves the uncomfortable feeling that the missionaries offered the Harris converts, in place of the bread they were crying for, not a stone certainly, but perhaps a rather hard loaf. The missionaries did not take the view that they should help a church already in existence; the Protestants followed the Catholics in cultivating close relations with the Administration, in building an impressive headquarters in the capital, in erecting fine churches, and in cutting off polygamists. They applied tested Wesleyan Methodist rules, where possible, to the holding of lands and churches. They introduced "class tickets" and collections, imposed leaders (the youths from

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1 A. Roux.

2 Platt, "The Ivory Coast Today," op. cit., p. 229.

Dahomey) whose first loyalty would be to them, and in fact gave the converts the difficult choice of either becoming proper Wesleyan Methodists or remaining independent and ignorant.

So far as W.J. Platt and his colleagues were concerned, they had no alternative. They could only expect support if they did inaugurate a Methodist Church; English Methodism would not support missionaries who were merely assisting a native independent church, nor would the Ivory Coast Government have allowed it.

All things considered, the policy followed by Platt is seen to have admirable features too often lacking in missionary projects, and these indicate the sympathy and understanding he had for the confused converts. As he wrote, "We tried from the very first to make Friendship our keynote,"[1] and this was done most concretely by accepting the institutions and practices which had become characteristic of the Harris congregations. The offices of Twelve Apostles, "Peter of the Church," and preacher were reformed and extended. The vernacular was utilized through the speedy provision of translations of hymns and the Scriptures, while original composition was stimulated by choir contests in which congregations presented Christian messages set to traditional music. Similarly, dramatic competitions were held, taking Bible stories for their subject. The African love of rhythm was encouraged in church-sponsored brass bands and the revival of dancing, which the Twelve

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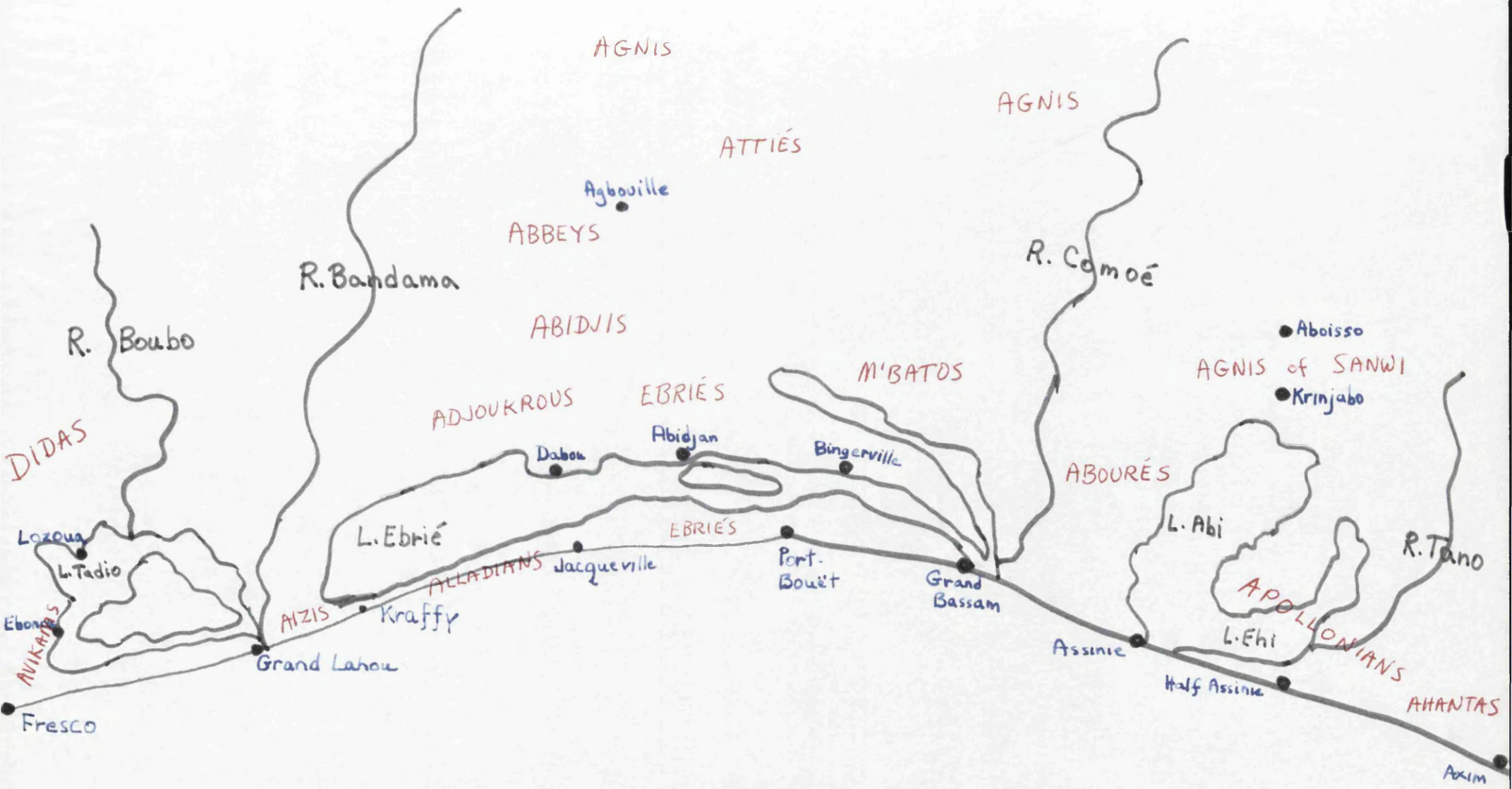
[1] Platt, An African Prophet, op. cit., p. 117.

Apostles had forbidden in many villages because of old associations with pre-Christian festivals. The Reader's Campaign sponsored by Platt was a precursor of Dr. Laubach's "each one teach one;" certificates were awarded with spaces for up to nine names of those taught by the bearer. The energy put into the encouragement of these things, as into providing an educational system and efficient supervision, was highly laudable.

The tragedy of the Methodist intervention is that it was too late to preserve the unity of the society which Harris had converted en masse. It was not they who divided the people; it had happened very largely before they came, and perhaps it was inevitable. Yet if in 1914 the Fathers of Lyon had brought themselves to imitate those Jesuits of the Far East who laboured to adapt their approach to the Brahmins and Confucians and had similarly tailored the faith they offered to the expectations aroused by Harris and the needs of the people, what a brilliant breakthrough they might have achieved! However, the Administration would not have permitted this; it was in its power to encourage either Protestant or Catholic Mission, and in the name of religious neutrality, it discouraged both. Colonial governments have commonly been accused of using the Christian missionaries as tools for helping to overcome the resistance of the colonized. One could wish that Governor Angoulvant had followed up his initial support for Harris by an equal support for either of the two Missionary Societies in the

country, and so preserved the social unity of the converted peoples under their natural leaders.

Despite the mistakes of the past, the intentions of Harris were to a large extent realized. The traditional religion and the fears it inspired disappeared from the eastern coastal regions of the Ivory Coast, and the majority of the natives joined one or other of the Christian churches. Freed of the age-old restrictions which hampered their initiative, they took advantage of the opportunities for advancement, especially in economic matters, and by their readiness to learn from the French, became part of the modern world with no risk of being left behind as a fossilized remnant of human society.



SKETCH MAP OF TOWNS AND TRIBES OF THE EASTERN IVORY COAST
AND WESTERN GHANA - 1914
(proportions inexact)

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL

The most valuable documentary source for the Ivory Coast material on Harris is without doubt the National Archives, the former administrative archives of the colony, still housed in the garret of the Ministry of the Interior in Abidjan. These archives are badly arranged and it is difficult to locate relevant material. The records are kept in file folders separately numbered. Those consulted for this study and cited here were:

X-46-27	Affaires Politiques, Cercle des Lagunes, 1912
X-46-13	Affaires Politiques, Cercle des Lagunes, 1913
X-46-23	Affaires Politiques, Cercle des Lagunes, 1913
X-46-24	Affaires Politiques, Cercle des Lagunes, 1913
X-46-25	Affaires Politiques, Cercle des Lagunes, 1914
X-46-26	Affaires Politiques, Cercle des Lagunes, 1915
X-46-17	Affaires Politiques, Cercle de Grand Bassam, 1922-24
X-39-4	Affaires Politiques, Cercle de Grand Lahou, 1913-14
X-39-5	Affaires Politiques, Cercle de Grand Lahou, 1917-18
X-27-14	Affaires Politiques, Cercle d'Assinie, 1914-15
X-21-441	Official Reports etc., 1911-19
VI-29-54	Administrateur Bourgine's Report, 1920
VII-8-57	Correspondence, 1914

The former French West African Federal Government Archives at Dakar, now the National Archives of Senegal, has an easily accessible

Harris Dossier

It contains correspondence and reports not only on Harris and the repercussions of his work, but also relating to the Roman Catholic Mission and the decision of the Administration to support it, as a result of the policy change stimulated by the Protocol of St. Germain. This Dossier contains Administrateur Bourgine's two Reports on the religious situation in 1920.

The Public Records Office in London has material on the Liberian situation from 1903 to 1910. The greater part of the Foreign Office sources consists of reports from the British Consul in Monrovia with various enclosures, as well as memoranda circulated in the Foreign Office on Liberian developments. Records consulted included:

C.O. 267	Original Correspondence
F.O. 47/34	General Correspondence, 1903
F.O. 47/38	General Correspondence, 1898-1905
F.O. 47/39	General Correspondence, 1903-1905
F.O. 367/65	General Correspondence - Africa - Affairs of Liberia, 1907
F.O. 367/66	General Correspondence - Africa - Affairs of Liberia, 1907
F.O. 367/184	General Correspondence - Africa - Affairs of Liberia, 1910
F.O. 367/185	General Correspondence - Africa - Affairs of Liberia, 1910
F.O. 371/187	Political 1906 (Liberian Development Scheme)
F.O. 403/390	Confidential Prints - Memorandum respecting Liberia, 1907
F.O. 458/9	Correspondence: Confidential Prints - West Africa - Part XIII
F.O. 458/10	Correspondence: Confidential Prints - West Africa - Part XIV
F.O. 458/11	Correspondence: Confidential Prints - West Africa - Part XIV
F.O. 458/12	Correspondence: Confidential Prints - West Africa - Part XV
F.O. 458/13	Correspondence: Confidential Prints - West Africa - Part XVI
F.O. 458/14	Correspondence: Confidential Prints - West Africa - Part XVII

The archives of the Methodist Missionary Society in London supplied material consisting of correspondence between missionaries in the field and the executive in London. The files consulted were:

Gold Coast File, 1912-17
Gold Coast File, 1917-22
Gold Coast File, 1922-25
Western Nigeria File, 1922-25
French West Africa File, 1925-26
French West Africa File, 1927-29

In Ghana, the Office of the Regional Commissioner, Cape Coast, was the source of

File C 733 - Church of the Twelve Apostles

This file is among those since transferred to the Cape Coast Branch of the National Archives of Ghana.

Relevant material consulted at the National Archives of Ghana in Accra included:

Record Book of Axim District, 1914-1930
Quarterly Reports for the Western Province, 1914-18
Three confidential letters for the Western Province:

Conf. No. 229/2/15	District Commissioner, Enchi, to Commissioner, Western Province
Conf. 7/15	District Commissioner, Sefwi, to Commissioner, Western Province
Conf. 830/407/D	Commissioner, Western Province, to District Commissioner, Sefwi

Other useful files in Ghana include those at the Office of the Methodist Church of Ghana in Accra. Evidence has been cited from

Minutes of the United Synod and of European Committee, Gold Coast District (subsequently entitled, Minutes of the Gold Coast Synod and Local Committee), 1914-17

At the Catholic Mission House, Axim, can be seen

The Journal kept by Father Stauffer, the Catholic missionary at Axim A copy is also kept at the Archbishop's House, Cape Coast.

The Église Protestante Méthodiste in the Ivory Coast appears to have no archives; the only interesting material discovered was at Bonoua, now the headquarters of Grand Bassam Circuit, where Pastor Jean Mel showed me the following:

Baptismal Register - Grand Bassam, April 1917-July 1919
A Minute Book of the Quarterly Meeting of the Wesleyan Methodist Society, Grand Bassam, 1916-1923
Minutes of the Leaders' Meetings, Grand Bassam, December 1921-February 1929

The archival collections of the Societé des Missions Africaines at Lyon and at Rome were unfortunately barred to me, although the Rev. B.J. Eerden, the Archivist at Rome, provided photostats of some scarce published material.

In London, the Archivist of the Society for the Propogation of the Gospel allowed me to see the reports of Archdeacon Morrison which first described the Swatson section of the Movement originated by Harris.

PRIMARY PUBLISHED SOURCES - PART I

These sources have been of prime importance for facts and ideas.

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Casely Hayford, Joseph E. Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation. London, Phillips, 1911. This provides valuable clues to one period of Casely Hayford's thinking.

-------- William Waddy Harris, the West African Reformer: The Man and His Message. London, Phillips, 1915. This is the best descriptive and interpretative work on Harris.

de Billy, Edmond. En Côte d'Ivoire. Paris, Mission Protestante d'A.O.F., 1931. An account by a Methodist missionary who worked among the Harris converts in the Ivory Coast.

Field, Margaret J. Search for Security: an Ethno-Psychiatric Study of Rural Ghana. London, Faber & Faber, 1960. This is undoubtedly a book of prime importance when considering the African belief in witchcraft and the disintegrating effects of this belief on society.

Gorju, Joseph. La Côte d'Ivoire Chrétienne. 2d ed. Lyon, Librairie Catholique Emmanuel Vitte, 1915. This is an account of Catholic Mission work in the Ivory Coast by one of the Fathers who spent many years there.

-------- "Un Prophète à la Cote-d'Ivoire," L'Écho des Missions Africaines de Lyon, XIV, 4, September-October 1915. This is an unfriendly account of Harris.

Harrington, Peter. "Une Interview avec le Prophète Noir," L'Écho des Missions Africaines de Lyon, XVI, 5, September-October 1917, and 6, November-December 1917. This is the account of an Irish missionary in Liberia who talked with Harris in 1916.

Hartz, J. "Le Prophète Harris Vu par Lui-Même," Devant les Sectes Non-Chrétiennes, Rapports et Compte Rendu de la XXXIme Semaine de Missiologie, Louvain, 1961. Bruges, Desclée de Brouwer, 1961. Extracts from the journal of Father Hartz, who met Harris in 1914, presented by G. van Bulck.

Joseph, Gaston. La Côte d'Ivoire, le Pays, les Habitants. Paris, 1917. This contains one of the earliest accounts of Harris.

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Platt, William J. An African Prophet; the Ivory Coast Movement and What Came of It. London, S.C.M. Press, 1934. This is the best known English account by the missionary who built up Methodism among Harris's converts.

-------- "Facing Our Task on the Ivory Coast," The Foreign Field, XXIII, 11, August 1927.

-------- "The Ivory Coast Today," The Foreign Field, XXIII, 10, July 1927.

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The Methodist Recorder. A weekly newspaper published in London. 1915, 1916, 1917, 1924, 1925.

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PRIMARY PUBLISHED SOURCES - PART II

These sources have provided some original facts or ideas pertaining to this study.

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The following witnesses, arranged by country, have been an essential source of otherwise unobtainable information.

Liberia

Rev. J.D. Kwee Baker, Monrovia, July 1963.

The Republic of the Ivory Coast

Rev. Rowland Joiner, Abidjan, August 1963.
Jean Ekra, Bonoua, July 1963.
Rev. Jean Mel, Bonoua, July 1963.
Group of old men, including Nathaniel Esso, at Bohnne, July 1963.
Rev. Laurent Lassm, Dabou, August 1963.
Group of four old men, Addah, August 1963.
Group of old men at Adjué, August 1963.
Group of old men at Tefredji, Ile Deblay, August 1963.
An Adjoukrou scholar (lecturer in Philosophy at the University in Abidjan), August 1963.
Group of fourteen old men at Grand Lahou, August 1963.
Group of old men at Lozoua, August 1963.
Ledjou N'Drin Gaston, Grand Lahou, August 1963.
Group of old men at Ebonou, August 1963.
Abraham Nandjui, Sanfon-Té, August 1963.
Preacher, Methodist Church, Songon M'Brathé, August 1963.
Boniface Tchikpadan, Songon M'Brathé, August 1963.
Methodist representatives at the Alladian Quarterly Meeting, Koubé, Ile Deblay, August 1963.
Group of old men at Koubé, Ile Deblay, August 1963.
Jonas Ahui and his son Paul Ahui, Petit Bassam, 17 August 1963.

Group of old men (A. Ahin, E. Leloux, E. Gbedje, A. Danho, P. Kolan) at Adjamé-Bingerville, August 1963.
Group of old men at the Methodist Church at Petit Bassam, August 1964.
Groups of people at Audouin, August 1964.
Daniel Aka Cablan, Krinjabo, August 1964.
An old man at Akoupé, August 1964.
Group of old men at Céchi, August 1964.
Group, including old preacher, at Assaoufoué, August 1964.
Lambert Ackah, Grand Lahou, August 1964.
Mathieu Adobi, Adjamé-Abidjan, August 1964.
Group of old men at Débrimou, August 1964.
Group of old men at Mopoyeme, August 1964.
Group, including Gnagne Jerome, Orbaff, August 1964.

Ghana

Canon C.H. Elliott, Cape Coast, September 1963-June 1965.
A town Captain and group of old men at Half Assinie, December 1963.
J.P. Ephson, August 1963.
Mr. Anthony, Beyin, April 1964.
Elder Buah Nrezah, Attuabo, April 1964.
Sub-Chief Tumunli Kwesi, Axim, April 1964.
J. Barnes Christian, Axim, April 1964.
George A. Ackah, Axim, April 1964.
Cudjoe Monnor II, Alluapokeh, April 1964.
Grace Thannie II and followers, Church of the Twelve Apostles, Ancobra, December 1963.
Prophetess Susanna Awotwi, Church of the Twelve Apostles, Kikam, December 1963.
Bishop Michael George and followers, Church of the Twelve Apostles, Kormentine, Saltpond, December 1963-January 1964.

France

Rev. A. Roux, Paris, March 1963.

England

Dr. W.J. Platt, London, March 1966.

Letters and Personal Manuscripts

Letter describing history of the Mission Biblique from Rev. Jacques Blocher, Paris Tabernacle Church, 14 June 1963.
Records of Église Harriste Biblique, Grand Lahou, August 1963.

A memoir of Jacques Boga Sako, Ebonou, 29 August 1963.
Typewritten notes on l'Église Harriste by Paul Ahui, Abidjan, August 1963.
Rev. Laurent Lassm, "Beliefs and Customs of the Adjoukrous," Dabou, August 1963.
Letters from Canon C.H. Elliott, Cape Coast, 12 March 1963-8 November 1965.
Letter from S.J.M. Johnson, Monrovia, 20 July 1965.
J.A. Murray, Tampa, Florida, notes of an interview with Rev. W.B. Williams, St. Petersburg, Florida, 26 January 1966.

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